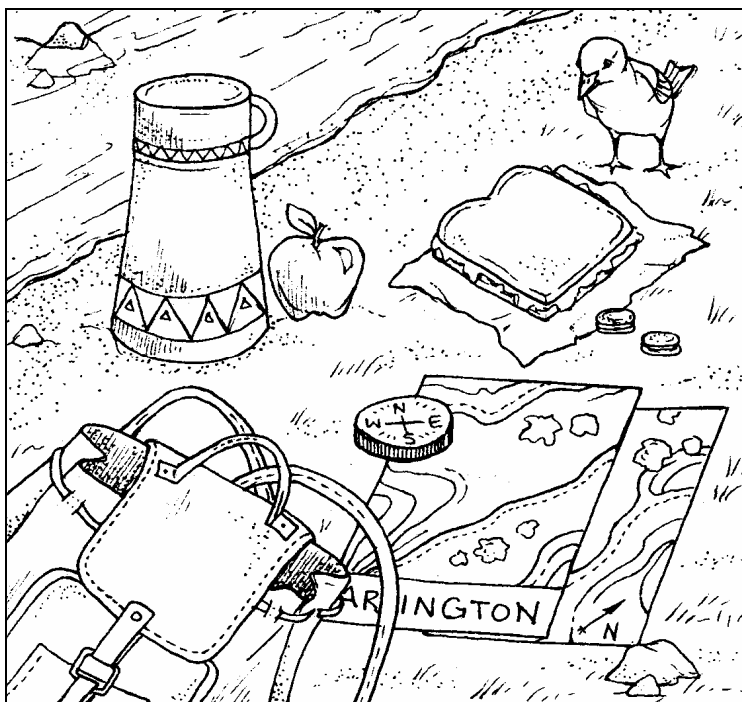


[Cover Illustration]



by
Adaela McLaughlin
Second Edition

[Inside Cover]

The goal of this book is to provide the citizens of Arlington, Massachusetts with a description of the town's public open spaces in the hopes of enhancing enjoyment of these places. A series of five walking tours is offered that allow one to connect a variety of habitats in a suburban area, including woodlands, marsh, lake, river and brook, by walking from one to the other. A listing of the open spaces which are not included on the walking tours is also provided.

Original publication of this book was made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management Greenways Grants Program in 1994.

The Arlington Conservation Commission gratefully acknowledges that the second printing of Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts was supported, in part, by a grant from the Arlington Arts Council, a local agency, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

All proceeds from the sale of this book go towards the Arlington Conservation Commission Education Fund.

[Page 1]

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

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and citizens of Arlington

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Printed on recycled paper

1994

Second Printing 1996

Special thanks to all those who have helped with this publication:

Susan Brent, *Chairperson of the Arlington Conservation Commission*
Alan McClennen, Kevin O'Brien, Clare Hurley and Alice Norman
of the Arlington Planning and Community Development Office
Judy Hodges, Steve Mattingly, Dot Maher, Geri Tremblay, Dick
Bowler, and Roly Chaput *of the Arlington Conservation*
Commission
Bruce Wheltle and Elsie Fiore, *former Arlington Conservation*

Commission members

Stew Sanders, Lee Taylor and Eric Anderson *of the Mystic River*
Watershed Association .
Karsten Hartel, Gene Benson, Karen Thomas, Heidi Schultz and
Mike Sacarny *of the Vision 20/20 Environmental Task Force*
Jack Johnson *of BBN Software Products*
John Andrews *of Citizens for Lexington Conservation*
Rick Van de Poll *of Antioch New England, Keene, New Hampshire*
Bernice Jones and Debra Hayes *of the Arlington Park and*

Recreation Commission

Oakes Plimpton, *author of Robbins Farm*
Benjamin Reeve *of the Hill's Pond Committee*
Taintor Davis Child *of the Garden for Youth*
Ernestine Kaliontzis *of the Arlington Garden Club*
Prince Hall Masonic Grand Lodge, Dorchester
Leslie Kiernan, Cheryl Bourjet, Deirdre Tanton and Sharon Drujon
of the Healer's Support Group

This book was written by the author to satisfy a degree requirement in a Master of Science in Environmental Communications Program at Antioch New England, Keene, New Hampshire. The author has been a resident of Arlington, Massachusetts, for seven years.

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[image: 5-1 yarrow]



Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

Open Space

The Town of Arlington is 3,518 acres in size (5.5 square miles). It contains approximately 800 acres of open space, including Great Meadows in Lexington (185 acres) and open water (280 acres). A population of 44,630 gives the town a density of 8,000 people per square mile. (World density is 90 people per square mile of land.) Arlington has 18 acres of open space per every 1000 inhabitants. While these provide a fabulous storehouse of nature's treasures for an urban area, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) ranked Arlington as sixth of its 37 constituent communities in the need for additional natural sites and open space. Only Chelsea, Everett, Somerville, Watertown and Winthrop were ranked higher in need.!

"Open space," as a term, is extremely broad, and denotes any type of land without commercial or residential buildings. In the federal law, open space has been defined as any land located in an urban area which has value for park and recreation purposes, conservation of natural resources or historic, architectural or scenic purposes. At the state level, open space is usually grouped with recreation land and separately from natural land, however, recreation land can be in a natural, wild, open or landscaped condition.

Arlington's mapped open spaces are protected by the Massachusetts Constitution Article 97 amendments, which state that a two-third vote of each branch of the General Court is required to change the use of public lands.

In 1894, Arlington adopted 1882 Mass. Act 154 which declared that all public parks obtained under this act were to be forever open and maintained as public parks. For this reason, the term "park" can designate powerful protection of land. However, park lands can be

1 Metropolitan District Commission. Land Acquisition Program. December. 1992.
p. F-4.

managed in very different ways, for example, as mowed grass or as wooded areas. These are very different in their ecological makeup; the former requires the use of pesticides, herbicides and considerable human intervention with the corresponding loss of much wildlife, soil and water quality, while the latter is more sustainable in nature, thus more able to maintain its own ecological integrity.

The open spaces of Arlington fall under the jurisdiction of various town entities, serve different purposes and are accorded differing degrees of protection. Lands are under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission, the general heading of the Town of Arlington or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Arlington Conservation Commission is charged with protecting wildlife habitat and fisheries, educating the public, enhancing the acquisition of open space, protecting water resources from pollution, preventing storm and flood damage, preserving -and promoting protection of the water and groundwater supply and ensuring compliance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the local wetland by-law. The commission was created by Town Meeting in 1966 and is steward for 21 acres of land.

The Arlington Park and Recreation Commission encourages and supports a broad variety of recreation programs for all ages. It initiates and oversees programs to revitalize the town's parks and playgrounds. It strives to maintain and protect the town's open spaces and acquire additional land, where appropriate. The commission was created in 1973 and is steward for 162 acres of land.

Operating under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the MDC is steward for 16,000 acres of land in the Metropolitan Parks System as well as 120,000 acres of watershed and reservoir systems. As steward for the park system, the MDC is committed to planning, acquiring and managing properties; to preserving the landscape's natural and cultural diversity; to educating the public; to providing facilities for active recreation and healthful exercise; and to protecting and managing watershed lands in order to conserve pure water for human consumption.

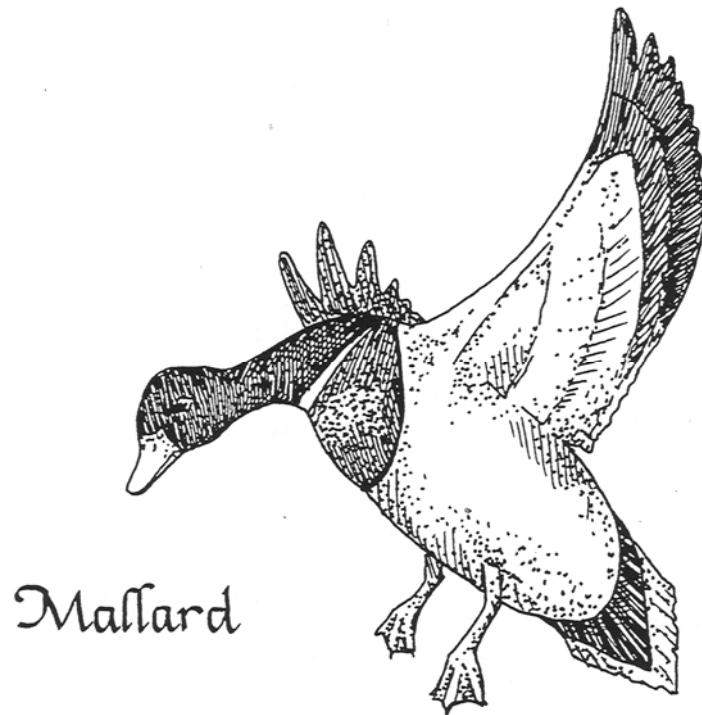
The open spaces in Arlington serve diverse purposes, yet they

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

are best managed and protected by a single, comprehensive plan. While walking these spaces, note what is most enjoyable about them, whether it be the quiet, the view, observing wildlife or providing a place for reflection. Noting how open space can be best utilized by the entire community-- as Native Americans say, by both twoleggeds and four-leggeds, both large and small-- is a great benefit to planning the use of open space.

9vtacrarcl

[image: 8-1 mallard]



A History of Land Use

The first human dwellers in New England arrived approximately 11,000 years ago. These Paleo-Indians were hunters who followed the herds of large mammals, such as woolly mammoths, barren ground caribou, elk and bear, that habited the spruce-fir forest existing here at the time. The people found shelter under rock overhangs, in caves and in temporary huts.

Archaic Indians evolved from the Paleo Indians approximately 8,000 to 10,000 years ago. These people used different hunting techniques and tools than the Paleo Indians and were also food gatherers, eating nuts, seeds, fruits and bark. One reason the Archaic Indians used different hunting techniques was because of a different and new supply of game. About 8,000 years ago, the spruces and firs declined, and oak, hemlock, birch, ' alder, hornbeam and bayberry began to dominate the landscape. This caused a change in the types of animals habiting the region. Slightly smaller mammals, such as the mastodon, woodland caribou, musk-ox, bison, sloth, beaver, new species of bear and elk, and moose moved up from the south. Late

Archaic Indians hunted even smaller game, such as white-tailed deer, turkey, heath hen, muskrat, woodchuck, rabbit and raccoon, as well as fish and other aquatic creatures.

About 2,000 years ago, Adena Indians from the Ohio Valley made their way east and infiltrated New England. They brought with them maize seeds and clay pots and a culture that revolved around agriculture. The period from 300 A.D. to around 1650 A.D. became known as the Ceramic-Woodland period, and the people were known as Algonquins. The Algonquins extensively altered the landscape, burning the forests to clear land for agriculture and for better hunting. Along the coast from Maine to New York, the woods were open and lacking the dense trees and undergrowth of forests in the interior. The English reverend, Francis Higginson, wrote in 1630 "of a hill near Boston from which one could see 'thousands of acres'

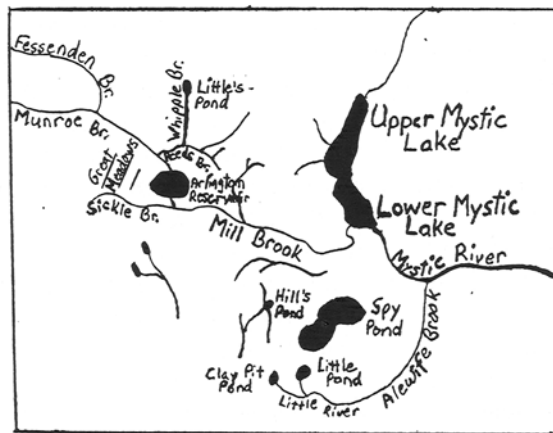
Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

with 'not a Tree in the same: Boston itself was in fact nearly barren..." 2

Part of the Algonquin family, the Massachusetts tribe lived near the Alewife Brook and Mystic Lakes. They cleared large stretches of land in what is now Arlington, growing corn and fertilizing the land with alewives. The Massachusetts chief who sold the land in which Arlington residents now live was called Tahattawan, the Squaw Sachem; her favorite place was said to be the western shore of the Mystic Lakes.

The Massachusetts term, menotomy, for which Arlington was once named, means "swift, running water." It was water which characterized settlement by English immigrants and their descendents, when in the 17th century, newcomers began to settle near Mill Brook and Alewife Brook.

[image: 10-1 waterways map]



Waterways of Arlington and Vicinity in 1650

Note: Names shown are modern and were not necessarily in use in 1650. (From *The Growth of the Town of Arlington*. Pictorial map presentation from 1650 to 1800. Arlington, 1972.) .

2 William Cronin, *Changes in the Land*, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., Toronto, 1983, pp. 25-26. Taken from Higginson's Plantation, p. 308.

In the middle of the 17th century, Arlington served mainly as an outlying district to Cambridge, supplying pastures and woodlots? In northwest sections, there were until about 1830 only a few residents, since the steep slopes and shallow soils prevented roads.

From 1830-1900 substantial settlement occurred along Summer and Mystic Streets. In 1846, the opening of the railroad brought in residents who worked outside the town and launched the era of suburbanization. In 1872, a suburban development called the Crescent Hill Subdivision was initiated in the area of Mount Gilboa and rock formations were cleared with power machinery.⁴ By the late 19th century, Massachusetts Avenue's border of pasture, broken fields of varied crops and orchards had been turned in many spots into buildings used for hothouse cultivation.⁵

But even in the year 1867, the town still held many beautiful natural spots, and was described as such by the honorable Charles Sumner in a speech for the town's name change to Arlington. "Yours is not a large town; nor has it any considerable history; But what it wants in size and history, it makes up in beauty. Yours is a beautiful town. I know nothing among the exquisite surroundings of Boston more charming than these slopes and meadows, with the background of hills and the gleam of water. The elements of beauty are all (here. Hills are always beautiful; so is water. I remember hearing Mrs. Fanny Kemble say more than once that water in a landscape is 'like eyes in the human countenance,' without which the countenance is lifeless. But you have water in abundance, gleaming, shining, sparkling in your landscape. The water-nymphs might find a home here. You have gardens also beautiful to the eye and beautiful in

3 Arlington Historical Commission, Mill Brook Valley. An Historical and Architectural Survey. 1984. pp. 5-6.

4 Arlington Historical Commission. Northwest Arlington Massachusetts. An Architectural and Historical Study (by Landscape Research, 1980), pp. 11, 13, 17, 18).

5 Arlington Historical Commission. Mill Brook Valley. An Historical and Architectural Survey, 1984, p. 7.

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their nourishing and luscious supplies. Surely it may be said of those who live here, that their lines have fallen in a pleasant place.,,6And in 1896 "broad, forested hills open here and there to cultivation and pasture" described land in northwest sections? It was in this year that the town purchased the land for Menotomy Rocks Park and Meadowbrook Park.

The 20th century brought with it ever greater population growth. "Of all the events surrounding the evolution of the...landscape..., the explosive growth of early 20th century residential construction on the once fertile floodplain of East Arlington is the most striking." 8 In spite of, or perhaps because of, the rapid growth of East Arlington, the Metropolitan Parks Commission, now the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), began to purchase property along the Alewife Brook and Mystic River in 1901. In 1912, Turkey Hill was acquired. But after WWII, the last large open spaces were purchased for the construction of schools and residences. By 1972, 91% of the land had been developed into residential use, and by 1988, 95%. Arlington now has 125 miles of public streets. Left in the last decade of the 20th century with a legacy of extremely fast population growth and its subsequent land modifications, it's imperative to stop and contemplate the effects of such unrelenting growth and plan for the future.

[image: 12-1 mountain laurel]



6 Benjamin and William Cutter, *The History of the Town of Arlington* (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1880), p. 162.

7 Arlington Historical Commission, *Northwest Arlington Massachusetts, An Architectural and Historical Study* (by Landscape Research, 1980), p. 14.

8 Arlington Historical Commission, *Ice, Crops, and Commuters*, (by American Landmarks. Inc., 1981), p. 8.

Ecology of Arlington

Geologically, Arlington lies at the edge of a broad, flat, floodplain known as the Boston Basin. The floodplain in the southeast section of Arlington is a part of the basin, with an elevation of 10-50 feet above sea level. Other parts of town mark the edge of the Blue Hills complex, attaining 377 feet in elevation. The rocks here are batholithic, igneous rocks; they were produced under conditions of intense heat and are believed to have crystallized at considerable depth below the earth's surface. The rocks include granite, syenite and diorite. These were modified somewhat by glaciers 12,000 to 15,000 years ago when an advance of the Laurentide ice sheet left behind a moraine, or mound of debris, formed from scraping existing bedrock and depositing debris.

During the retreat of the ice sheet, buried ice blocks melted and left holes in the debris called kettles. Spy Pond and the Mystic Lakes were formed in this manner. Spy Pond is fed entirely by runoff from the land and nearby hills.

Soils are a product of the combined effects of geology, rainfall, temperature and vegetation. Most of the soils in Arlington are now urban land complexes; the soils have been modified so that they no longer retain their original properties. Arlington's most common soil, a Charlton-Hollis-Urban Land Complex, is located in western areas and is found on slopes of 3-15%. Charlton soils are well drained, upland soils where the relief is affected by the bedrock. They are stony, with 60 inches or more of friable fine sandy loam (loam is a silt-sand-clay mixture). Hollis soils are shallow (<20 in.), excessively drained soils on bedrock uplands. They are also friable fine sandy loam. East Arlington contains primarily a Merrimac- Urban Land Complex found on 0-8% slopes. Merrimac soils are excessively drained soils on glacial outwash plains and are sandy loams over a loose sand and gravel layer at 18-30 inches.

Soils are the substrate upon which vegetation and subsequently

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all life depends. The type of soil determines forest type. Arlington has mainly mesic forests, which occur on well drained, usually loam, soils. These soils are neither extremely sandy nor otherwise poor in quality; nor are they constantly moist and water-logged.

The Oak-Hickory Forest is prevalent in this area. It consists of tree species such as red oak, white oak, black oak, scarlet oak, bitternut hickory, sassafras and hophornbeam. In disturbed areas, black locust, gray birch, white pine and scrub oak occur. Shrubs that are common include blueberry, mapleleaf viburnum and deerberry. Herbaceous growth includes pipsissewa, sarsaparilla and false solomon's seal.

Yet, a proliferation of Norway and sugar maple trees, as well as paper birch populate the town. The Norway maple is non-native; it was brought to America from Europe. The sugar maple and paper birch are common in forests north of here, and are sensitive to fire. With the elimination of fire from the area, sugar maples and paper birch have begun to grow more abundantly.

Mammals common to Arlington are mainly small mammals such as Eastern gray squirrels. Some medium sized mammals such as skunk, opossum, and raccoon are also local residents. A wide variety of birds either nest or pass through, from the common chipping sparrow to the less common great blue heron. Fish include species such as the yellow perch, common to lakes and ponds, and the alewife, an anadromous (running upriver or upstream) fish that migrates to the Atlantic Ocean and returns to spawn.

A large number of non-native plant and wildlife species, that have either escaped from cultivation or have been introduced, occupy the open spaces and have changed the ecology of the landscape. These include trees such as the Norway maple mentioned earlier, along with numerous escaped cultivars. Large numbers of predators, such as people, dogs and cats have decreased or eliminated some species such as ground nesting birds and deer. "Dumped" fish feed heavily on, or compete with, native fish species, reducing the number of natives. Thus, the landscape has changed and will continue to change due to various environmental pressures.

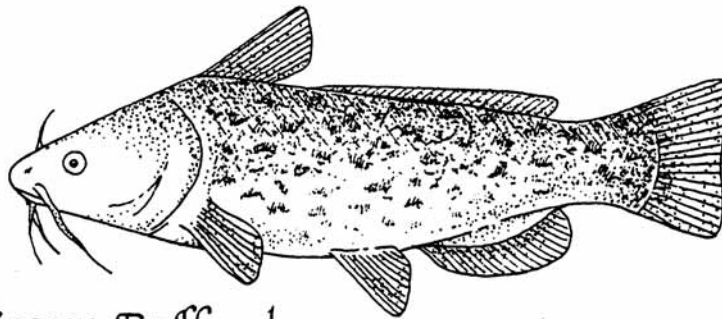
The Linear Parks

First conceived in The Town Plan *of* 1926 by Charles Eliot II, the idea *of* a linear park has been proponed by many *of* Arlington's environmental leaders. The linear park was originally envisioned as a greenway along Mill Brook. Parks were to have periodically expanded its width; these known as pocket parks.

Although a complete greenway along Mill Brook has not yet come to pass, the Alewife Brook and Mystic River Reservations do serve as long, linear parks offering their own unique characteristics. The Minuteman Bikeway, while not a greenway, since it is paved, also provides a linear park for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Both humans and animals *of* the region benefit from these corridors that permit access to waterways and other natural areas. As Arlington residents continue to develop a linear pocket park system along these routes, their efforts will yield something that is green in the truest sense, that is, an ecologically balanced habitat.

[image: 15-1 brown bullhead]



Brown Bullhead

The Future

Arlington has saved many beautiful natural areas. Still, it's important to continually assess the need for open space, in both quantity and quality. It is important, because each landscape is unique. As nature writer Barry Lopez said, "The differing landscapes of the earth are hard to know individually. They are as difficult to engage in conversation as wild animals. The complex feelings of affinity and self-assurance one feels with one's native place rarely develop again in another landscape."⁹

The dream of a linear pocket park system is a good reference point for an assessment of Arlington's open space. One can evaluate how well these ideals have been met and how the ideals not yet met can be addressed. There will almost always be competition for the acquisition of open spaces. Further, some believe the tax base will increase if residential or commercial development is allowed to continue. However, cost trade-off studies may help to assess the real income due to new residential or commercial development, minus the cost of municipal services, and minus the devaluation of residential land due to the corresponding loss of open space. Those who wish to see existing natural lands enhanced and augmented must face the obstacles realistically. Yet, they must also know that nothing is impossible.

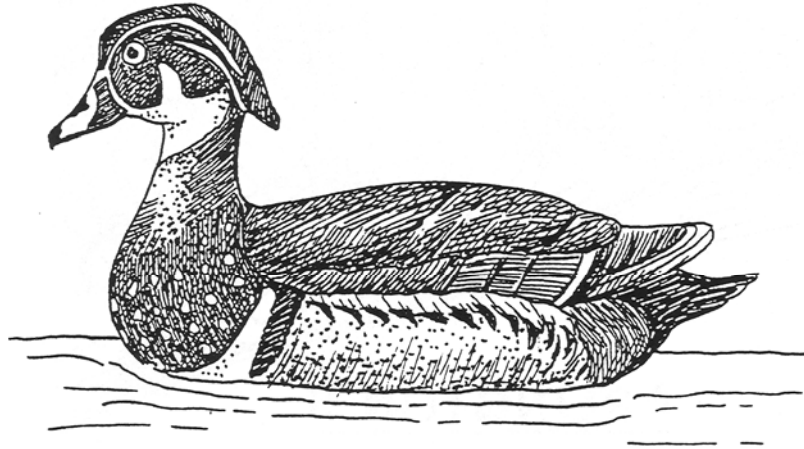
To maintain and manage the open spaces, residents may wish to inventory existing wildlife in order to know what lives and is being protected on these spaces. Residents may wish to put up boardwalks on the marsh properties such as the Forest Street Conservation Land and Meadowbrook Park so they can take strolls through the reeds and listen to the birds sing. Or residents may wish to make the

⁹Barry Lopez, "The Country of the Mind," from Words from the Land, edited by Stephen Trimble (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1989), p. 290.

community more sustainable by encouraging landscaping and gardening practices with a natural cyclical flow. Perhaps land could be purchased for community farming.

It is vital for residents to play an active role in protecting and planning for open spaces. By drawing upon the green visions of past and present, it is possible to realize one's dreams.

[image: 17-1 wood duck]



Wood Duck

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

[image: 18-1 AOS map 1]

[image: 19-1 AOS map 2]


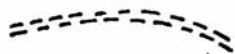





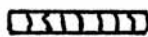
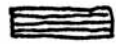

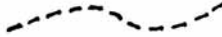

[NOTE: This has been pieced together and will need redrawing or some other kind of doctoring]



Map Key

[image: 20-1 map key]

Map Key

Marsh/Wetland	
Path/Trail	
Woods	
Tree	
Main Access Point	
Brook	
Pond	
Stone Wall	
Timber Bridge	
Spring	
Contour Line	
Difficult Walking	



Minuteman Bikeway Tour

The Minuteman Bikeway forms the basis for a tour mile long linear park connecting Arlington's open spaces from the Alewife Brook Reservation to the Great Meadows in Lexington (the total length of the Bikeway is 10.5 miles from Arlington to Bedford). It provides for a unique pocket park system linked by bicycle and pedestrian flow. It is a great town asset, a park that connects the entire town, from commercial and industrial establishments to residences and open spaces. It has the potential to open up new dimensions of life; a corridor based on pedestrian and bicycle flow can also become a center for cultural activities such as fairs, art shows and performance art.

The bikeway was completed in 1993, nearly 20 years after the idea's initial conception. Alan McClennen, Director of Arlington Planning and Community Development, worked on the project since the beginning, mainly by representing the town in negotiating with the numerous federal and state agencies involved. The land is owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBT A), however as of July 1, 1994, was taken over by the towns along the route for leasing and maintenance.

Riding the Bikeway, one can sightsee several of Arlington's open spaces. Starting at Magnolia Field and Community Gardens and Thorndike Field, one can ride by one of the town's jewels, Spy Pond, and continue on to the Jefferson Cutter House to see the old railroad bed still embedded in the stone. Taking a scenic detour, one can experience the history of the Old Burial Ground and the stillness of the Town Hall Garden. Regaining the Bikeway and heading a bit further west, one can stop at the small Water Street Trust Conservation Land, which will soon boast benches, and the Adamian Conservation Land. Riding on, one may wish to take another detour to play tennis at WellingtonPark or picnic on a rock in the oddly

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

shaped Brattle Street Conservation Land. The Old Schwamb Mill is right off the Bikeway, and can take one 350 years back in time. Taking a shortcut through Hurd Field, one can see the Arlington Reservoir, and if up to it, go for a swim in the swimming area or for a one mile walk around the perimeter. Taking another detour, one can ride up to Mount Gilboa, the largest piece of land under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Finally, riding further west into Lexington, one can experience the Great Meadows, a 185 acre tract of natural land owned by the Town of Arlington.

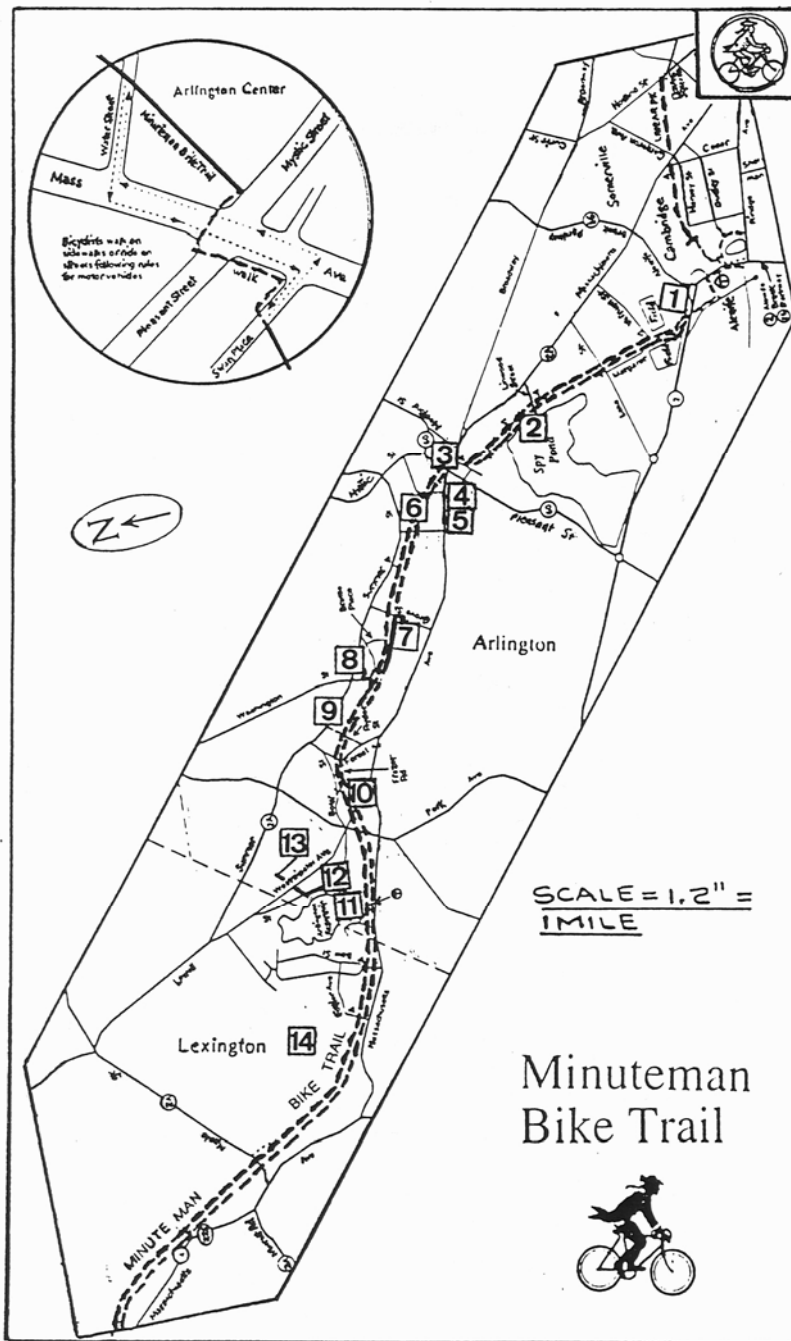
For birdwatchers, there are birds aplenty to see and hear along the trail. One can find such birds as the American widgeon, turkey vulture, bald eagle, ruffed grouse, great horned owl, yellow-bellied sapsucker, Acadian flycatcher, Carolina wren, Blackburnian warbler and the fox sparrow. (From "Birds Along the Minuteman Trail," compiled by Karsten Hartel and Lee Taylor in 1992.)

For more information, contact the Arlington Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway, Planning and Community Development Dept., Arlington Town Hall, 730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02174, 641-4891.

[image: 22-1 least flycatcher]



[image: 23-1 minuteman bike trail map]



1 Magnolia Field, Community Gardens and Thorndike Field

Located in East Arlington near Route 2 and the Alewife Brook Reservation, this 11-acre site provides ample room for sports and activities (see the map on page 45). The Minuteman Bikeway provides good access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Cars should park either on Varnum, Magnolia or Thorndike Streets north of Herbert Road, since time limits are not imposed here. A parking lot at Thorndike Field off Margaret Street is also available.

[image: 24-1 saucer magnolia]



Equipped with soccer and basketball facilities as well as a playground, Magnolia Field is well stocked, and recently renovated. The Community Gardens are administered by Arlington Recreation (there is a \$30 fee) and applicants can enter via lottery. There are approximately 28 gardens, all organically grown, measuring on average 12 feet by 15 feet. They are located in a sunny, fenced-in area with good soil near Herbert Road. The gardeners offer each other camaraderie and advice. In the summer, a Garden for Youth is run by Arlington resident, Taintor Davis Child. Last year, the 34 participating children grew a sunflower house, a small area enclosed



by sunflowers.

The area was once a wetland, filled in when the Alewife MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) station was completed, so the area is still quite damp. At one time, two houses were attempted to be built on Magnolia Field, but their foundations sunk. Recent plantings in Magnolia field include sweet gum, magnolia and sequoia trees. Goldfinches, sparrows, mourning doves and redwinged blackbirds can be found.

Magnolia Field and Community Gardens and Thorndike Field are under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission.

2 Spy Pond Park (Pond Lane), Spy Pond Field and Scannell Field

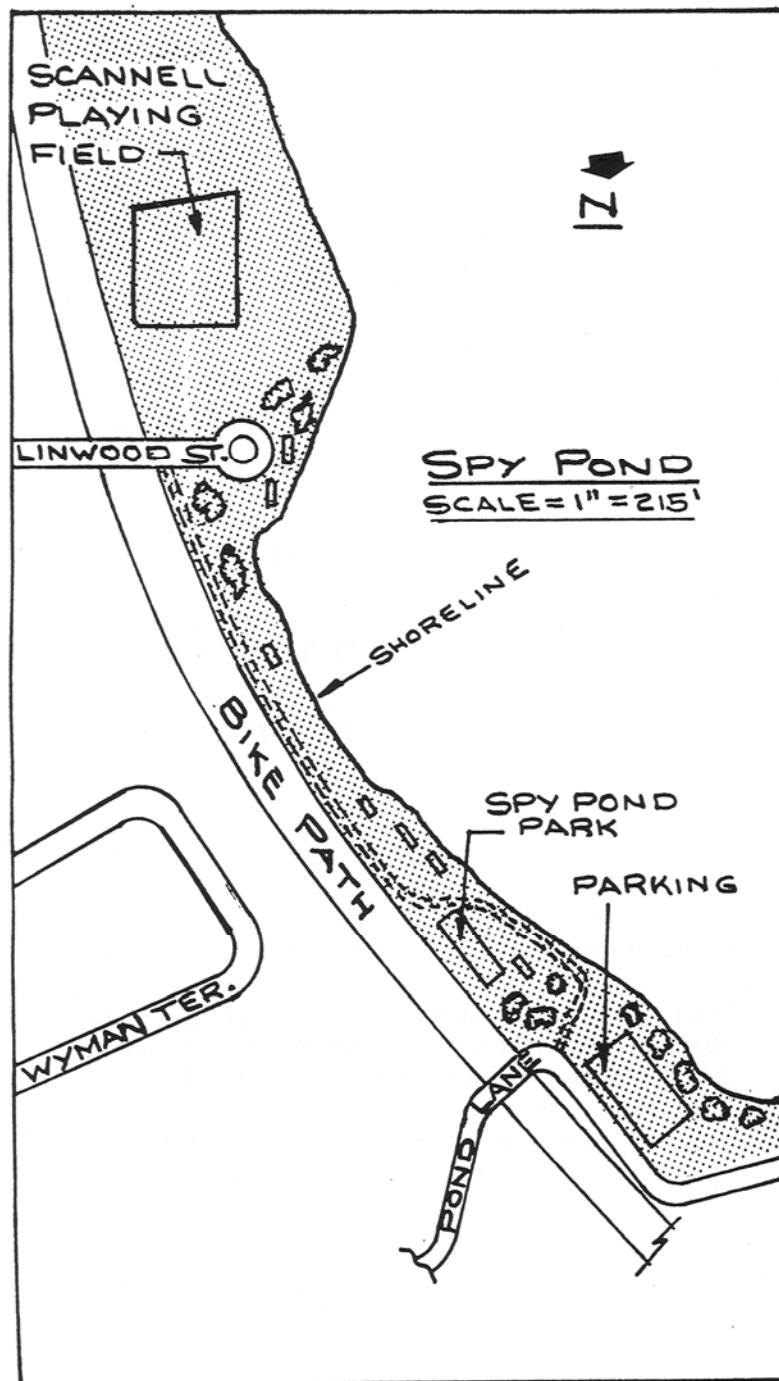
Located on the north end of Spy Pond, Spy Pond Park provides a 3.7 acre grassy area perfect for sunbathing, picnicking, boating (up to 5 horsepower only) and fishing during the hot summer months. On the Fourth of July, the grass is covered with the blankets of picnickers.

The Minuteman Bikeway runs along this linear shaped park, providing good access for bikers, walkers and runners. Cars can park at the end of Pond Lane/Wellington Street. Limited parking is also available on Linwood Street.

Three hundred years ago, Spy Pond was 140 acres in size. A swamp on the southern shore extended to the Alewife Brook.¹⁰

¹⁰Eva Belazs, Spy Pond Stories, (Arlington, MA: Tek/Komp, 1973), p. 14.

[image: 26-1 spy pond park map]





Today the pond is 100 acres. The water comes entirely from the runoff from the surrounding hills via 43 storm drains. For this reason, toxins dumped down the storm drain will pollute the pond. The water reaches a maximum depth of 38 feet and has an average depth of 14 feet. The pond is eutrophic, that is, an abundant accumulation of nutrients has built up and support a sense growth of algae. This is the result of a high nutrient content from stormwater and sediments. A thorough study of Spy Pond water quality can be found in Spy Pond. A Diagnostic Study 1980-1981, by Eben W. Chesebrough and Christine Duerring of the Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Quality Engineering, Div. of Water Pollution Control, Westborough, Massachusetts.

Trees in the park include apple, Norway maple, red maple, silver maple, sycamore maple, tree-of-heaven and willow. Shrubs include azalea, common buckthorn, winged euonymus, forsythia, common winterberry holly and smooth winterberry holly, honeysuckle and sweet pepperbush. Purple loosestrife dots the shoreline in the summer and poison ivy can be found growing on and around some trees.

Birds in the area include the cardinal, junco, snow bunting, evening grosbeak, goldfinch, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, chickadee, nuthatch, pheasant, cedar waxwing, sparrow, flicker, warblers, thrasher, red-eyed vireo, eastern kingbird, sandpiper and Baltimore oriole. One can find the common loon, pied-bill grebe, great blue heron, black-crowned night heron, wood duck, American widgeon, green-winged teal, American black duck, northern shoveler and many more. (See "Birds Along the Minuteman Trail," compiled by Karsten Hartel and Lee Taylor in 1992.)

Some interesting historical tidbits- Looking out over the water, one can see Elizabeth Island. In 1730, this two acre island was purchased by a Colonel Elyah Phipps and named Elizabeth after his wife.¹¹ In the winter of 1740-1741, the ice on the pond was frozen until March 7 to a thickness of 30 inches. Ice production became a

¹¹Ibid, p. 15.

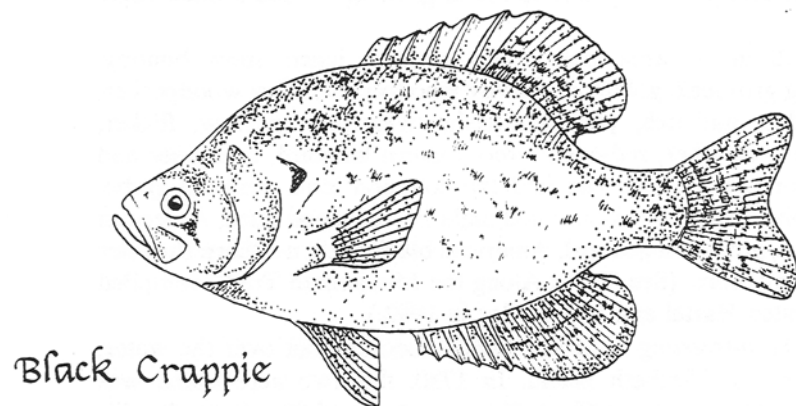
Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

major industry in 1825 and lasted into the 20th century. 150,000 tons of ice were produced per year. 12 For years, a seasonal festival was celebrated with a parade around Spy Pond followed by a sailing regatta. Unfortunately, there were some drownings in the 20th century and the regattas were stopped. 13

Going back in time to 42,000 years ago, a mammoth or mastodon roaming the area now encompassing Spy Pond left behind one of its tusks. The tusk was discovered in the early sixties by an Arlington resident fishing near the Boys and Girls Club. Over six feet long and 50 pounds in weight, it is now housed at the Museum of Science in Boston.

Spy Pond Field lies to the west of Spy Pond Park near the Boys and Girls Club. It is accessible from the Bikeway and Wellington Street. Scannell Field lies to the east of Spy Pond Park and is accessible from the Bikeway and Linwood Street. Spy Pond Park, Spy Pond Field and Scannell Field are under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Commission. A yearly cleanup of Spy Pond is sponsored by the Conservation Commission. Adrienne Landry is a Spy Pond neighborhood organizer.

[image: 28-1 black crappie]



12 Ibid, pp. 15, 37.

13 Ibid, pp. 36-37.



To continue the Minuteman Bikeway from Spy Pond, continue to Swan Place. Turn left onto Massachusetts Avenue and go to the traffic light. Cross Massachusetts Avenue.

3 Jefferson Cutter House and Whittemore Park

The Jefferson Cutter House is located on a one-acre lot in Arlington center at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic Street. Benches and grassy areas in front of the house make this a convenient rest area when shopping or riding the Minuteman Bikeway. Parking is located in the parking lot off Mystic Street.

The house, built in 1832, and land offer some interesting history. A stone marker in the southeast corner declares that at this site, Samuel Whittemore, 80 years of age, killed three British soldiers on April 19, 1775. He himself was shot, bayoneted, beaten and left for dead. He outwitted the British, though, and lived to be 98.

A ground placard states that the West Cambridge Railroad Station stood at this site from 1847-1883. The line was a part of the Lexington and West Cambridge Branch Railroad chartered in 1845, later part of the Boston & Maine Railroad. Passenger service on this line ended in 1977 and freight service in 1981. The only surviving track from the now-converted Minuteman Bikeway is preserved here.

The house was donated to the town by John and Artemis Mirak in 1989. It was moved to the present site and is now used for meetings and other functional gatherings. The site is landscaped and maintained by the Cambridge Savings Bank.

4 Old Burial Ground

Old tombstones and crypts dating from 1732 are perfect for sketching or adding incentive to the imagination. You can find them in the Old Burial Ground, a 1.5 acre area on Pleasant Street behind the Unitarian-Universalist church. Buried here are some heroes of the Revolutionary War including Jason Russell, Jason Winship, Jabez Wyman and nine minutemen from other towns. To reach the site from the Bikeway, turn south onto Pleasant Street (Route 60) at the town center. The Old Burial Ground is almost immediately on the right. Trees on the site include green ash, northern white cedar, slippery elm, hemlock, Norway maple, sugar maple, black oak, red oak, scarlet oak, white pine and black walnut.

5 Town Hall Garden

A garden can be a quiet, magical place, and this, surely, describes the 0.8 acre Town Hall Garden on Massachusetts Avenue surrounding the Town Hall. A red bricked path meanders by hobblebush and mountain laurel, magnolia and lilac. Wandering into the dark coolness of a hemlock grove, the Cyrus Dallin statue of the Menotomy Indian Hunter sits eternally reflective beside a pool of water. The statue was dedicated in 1913 to the memory of Winfield Robbins by the Robbins family (these were not the same Robbins of Robbins Farm). VISitors to the garden will also find Japanese andromeda, barberry, paper birch, crabapple, flowering dogwood, gray dogwood, winged euonymus, forsythia, hawthorne, Norway maple, red maple, white pine, privet, rhododendron and rose.



To reach the site from the Bikeway, at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Route 60, go west on Massachusetts Avenue. The Town Hall Garden lies on the left after the Robbins Library.

6 Adamian and Water Street Trust Properties

Bicycling along the Minuteman Bikeway, stop for a bit between Mill and Water Streets to discover these two small pieces of land. The Adamian property, named after its donor, is a triangular shaped piece of land located at the end of Central Street. It is situated adjacent to a beige house with black shutters on the south side of the Bikeway. From the Bikeway, the Adamian property lies to the right of the house, set back from the Bikeway, and running for 109 feet along it. It encompasses a ravine and is wooded, with many Norway maple trees.

The Water Street Trust property contains a 391 foot frontage on the north side of the Bikeway and will soon host two benches. This 2200 square foot parcel is near Mill Street at a break in the chain link fence bordering Buzzell Field. Tree-of-heaven, ashleaf maple and Russian olive trees grow there. Across the Bikeway from the site, stairs to the path along the brook will be constructed that will make Mill Brook more accessible. This path follows the brook to the Arlington High School and then resumes at Wellington Park

on Grove Street, then extending to a bridge at the Rembrandt building. The path may someday be extended to Brattle Street. The land was acquired as a gift in 1972 from Thirty Water Street Trust and is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

7 Wellington Park

Wellington Park is located on Mill Brook across from the Public Works Department on Grove Street. To reach the site from the Bikeway, exit onto Washington Street, turning right, then turn right onto Brattle Street, make a quick left onto Dudley Street, and a right at the end onto Grove Street. The park is on the right.

8 Brattle Street Conservation Land

The best access to this horseshoe-shaped 0.5 acre parcel surrounding 54 Brattle Street is from Brattle Terrace off Washington Street. From the Bikeway, exit onto Washington Street, turning left and then veering right to stay on Washington Street. Then turn at the first right onto Brattle Terrace. From the end of Brattle Terrace, a path leads into the property. Wandering down the path, one will find a good rock for sitting on in a clearing high above Brattle Street. Continuing down to the right and southwest, one will pass apple, common buckthorn, cherry, forsythia, bitternut hickory, Norway maple and black oak. Steps lead to Brattle Street at the bottom of the hill.

The land was acquired in 1969 as a gift from Prudence and James Green and is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation



Commission.

9 Arlington Veterans Memorial Recreation Center

The skating rink, fields and playground comprising the Arlington Veteran Memorial Recreation Center can be reached from the Bikeway by exiting at Ryder Street. By car, the area can be reached from Summer Street. The center is under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission.

10 The Old Schwamb Mill

In the National Register of Historic Places, the Old Schwamb Mill is a "must" for those wishing to see one of the finest preserved sights in Arlington. It is open from Monday to Friday (except holidays), 10-2. (It is best to make an appointment. Call 643-0554.) The Shaker Workshops, a showroom for reproduction Shaker furniture, is open Monday to Saturday (including some holidays), 10- 5. To reach the site (located on the western end of town) from the Bikeway, watch for the blue sign denoting Frazer Road. From there, Mill Lane and the Foot of the Rocks at Mill Brook are visible. Ride past the brook, and the three buildings of the Old Schwamb Mill are on both sides of Mill Lane. By car, take Lowell Street to 17 Mill Lane.

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The mill opened in 1650 as a grist mill and sawmill, that ground grains and spices and sawed logs into planks. In 1864, the mill was converted to a state-of-the-art woodworking shop in operation ever since. In 1971, the Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust was formed to prevent closure of the mill and to preserve the buildings, machinery, tools and traditions of the mill.

The Old Schwamb Mill complex is 0.4 acres in size and includes a large, town-owned grassy area. This grassy area was the site of a mill pond, now gone. On the other side of the brook is a grassy area belonging to Watermill Place Condominiums, but open to the public.

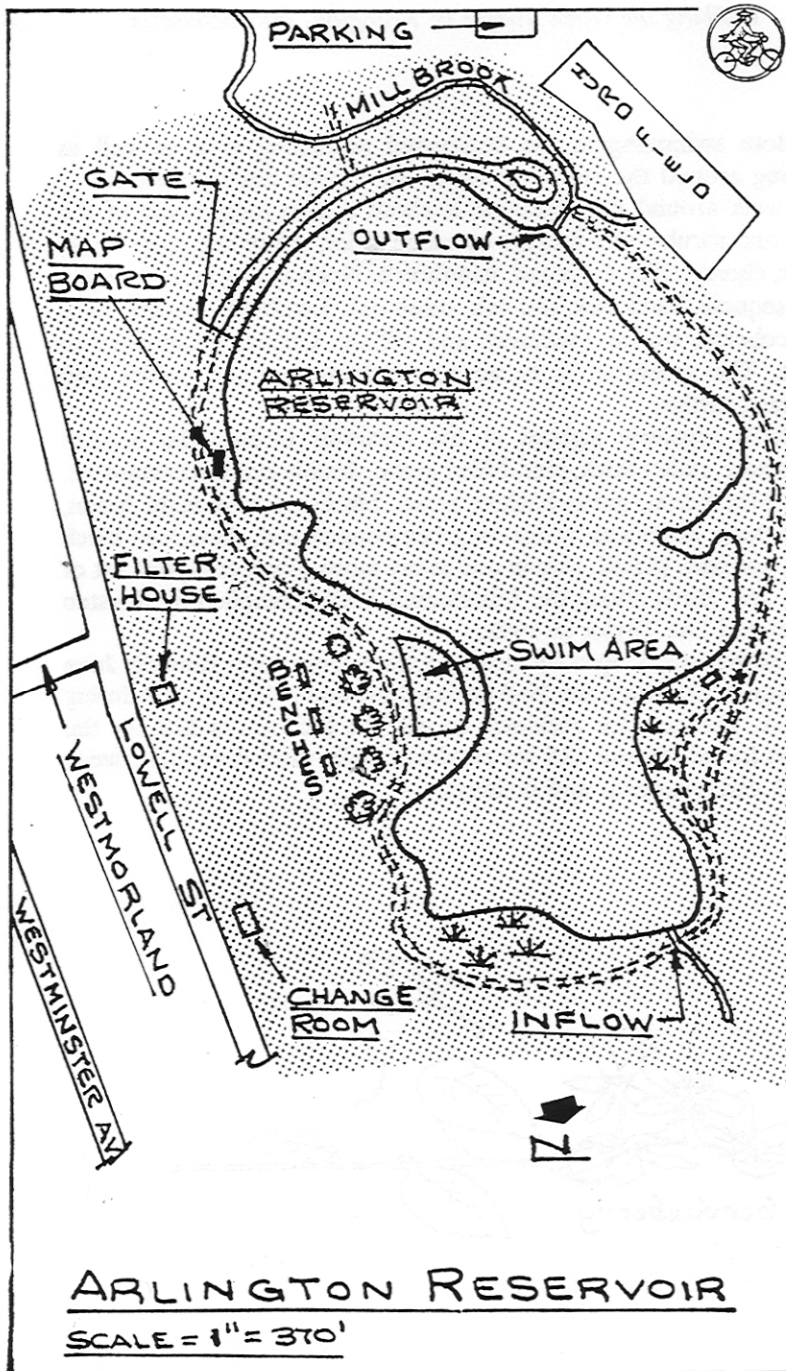
11 Hurd Field (The Heights Field)

Hurd Field is located to the south of the Arlington Reservoir. Access from the Bikeway at Drake Road, or by car, from Drake Road off Massachusetts Avenue. Drake Road is west of the former Highland Market, just before the Lexington town line.

12 Arlington Reservoir

This 30-acre site on the Lexington border includes the Reservoir and surrounding land. From the Bikeway, exit at Drake Road. Cross Hurd Field and follow a path over the Mill Brook to the reservoir. Best access by car is from Lowell Street or Drake Road off Massachusetts Avenue. (Drake Road is west of the former Highland Market, just before the Lexington town line.)

[image: 35-1 arlington reservoir map]



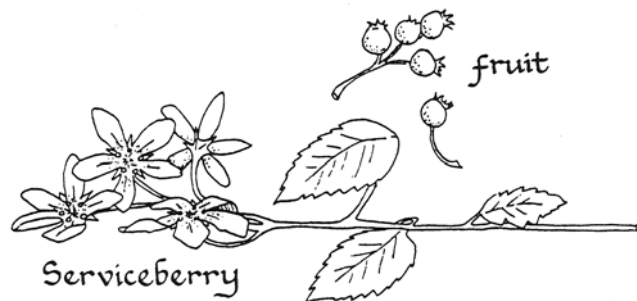
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Both swimming in the designated swimming area as well as walking around the reservoir make for a great day's activities. The walk around the reservoir is about a mile long. Some of the trees and shrubs here include speckled alder, white ash, gray birch, cedar, cherry, silky dogwood, hawthorne, Norway maple, red maple, metasequoia, black oak, red oak, scrub oak, Lombardy poplar, rose, serviceberry, sumac, sycamore and willow. Cattails grow close to shore. The reservoir is home to muskrats, painted turtles and snapping turtles.

Birds regularly sighted at the reservoir include the hooded merganser, ruddy duck, pied-billed grebe, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, green-backed heron, black-crowned night heron, wood duck, American widgeon, green-winged teal, American black duck, northern pintail, merlin and many more. For a complete list of birds, see "Birds Along the Minuteman Trail," compiled by Karsten Hartel and Lee Taylor in 1992.

A bath house is open seven days a week from approximately June 21-August 19. Hours are 10-8 during June and July and 10-7 during August. The cost for residents to use the facilities is \$20 for the season for adults and \$15 for children. Daily rates during the week are \$3 and weekends and holidays, \$4.

[image: 36-1 serviceberry]





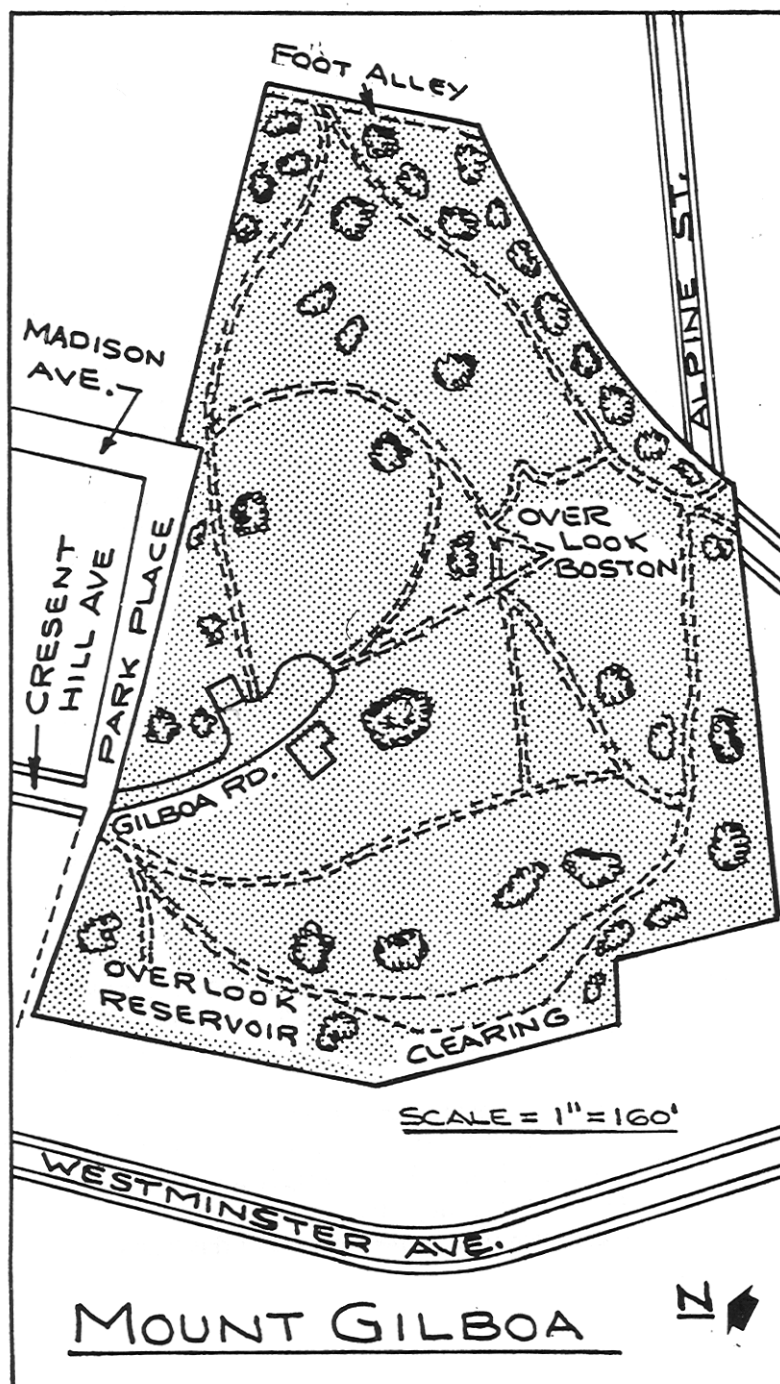
13 Mount Gilboa

Comprising 10 acres in northwest Arlington, Mount Gilboa is the largest piece of land under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Looking towards Massachusetts Avenue from the Park Circle area, a tall, tree covered hill to the northwest with a single house on top marks the site. The house belongs to the Conservation Commission, too, and is rented. It is best accessed from either Crescent Hill or Madison Avenue. From the Bikeway, exit at Drake Road, cross Hurd Field and ride along the east side of the reservoir to Lowell Street. Turn left onto Lowell Street then right onto Westmoreland Avenue, then take either the second or third right onto Crescent Hill or Madison Avenue and follow to the end.

A path follows the perimeter of the property. Starting at Crescent Hill and walking to the south of the house, the visitor will find barberry, Norway maple, red maple, red oak, white oak, black oak, cherry, hickory, low blueberry, deerberry, gray birch, white spruce, white pine, honeysuckle, sugar maple and sassafras. At the southern end, stand on a rocky outcrop and view the hills to the south. The water tower at Park Circle stands tall and clear far away. Continuing on, to the east of the house is a set of rocks overlooking a patch of woods below. An oak rooted beneath one's vision rises up, revealing the neatly "ironed" bark telltale of its genus, *Quercus*. Continuing on, one will cross an old farmers wall, the stones grown green with lichens. Hickory, sugar maple and rhododendron can also be found.

Walking further north, the path reveals a view of the houses far below. One is able to obtain a clearer perspective of "Our Town." Each house and each piece of land and everything living in this town rings with the delights of the day. It's so easy here to feel omnipresent, part of the town seen below, yet part of this beautiful, natural area as well.

[image: 38-1 Mount Gilboa map]





Some oldtimers tell stories that one can see the ocean from Mount Gilboa (maybe with binoculars!), and that during World War II, the area was cordoned off to serve as an interceptor of communications delivered from German submarines to sympathizers on shore.

Seven acres with 30 land parcels on Mount Gilboa were purchased in 1967 and 1968 from eight parties for a total cost of \$104,000. Partial funding came from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (\$30,000) and the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources (\$10,000). The remaining three acres on the top, including the house, which was designed and lived in by the Hayden family for many years, were purchased by Arlington in 1990 for \$675,000.

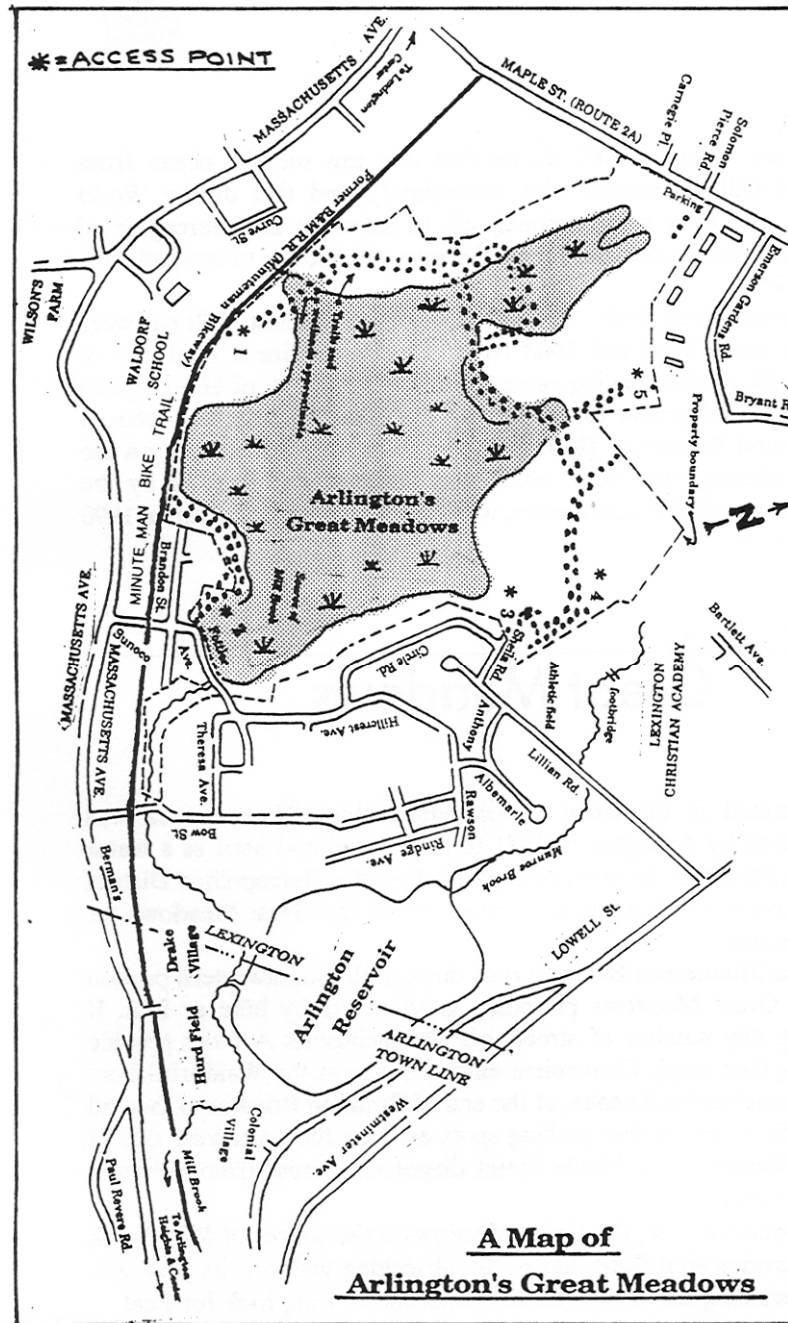
14 Great Meadows

Located in the town of Lexington, this 185 acre area was purchased by Arlington in 1871 to be flooded and used as a water supply. However, in 1899, Arlington joined the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and no longer needed the Great Meadows for this purpose.

The Minuteman Bikeway runs through the southwestern portion of the Great Meadows providing good access by bike or foot. If driving, any number of streets off Massachusetts Avenue provide parking (see map). Convenient entrances are at the Waldorf School on Massachusetts Avenue, at the end of Brandon Road or at the end of Sheila Road. A few parking spots exist on the northwest side of Great Meadows on Maple Street diagonally across from Solomon Pierce Road.

A wetland area, the Great Meadows is the source of Mill Brook and provides vital flood control by absorbing water in its peat soil. When walking the Great Meadows perimeter trail, look for Peat

[image: 40-1 arlington's great meadows map]



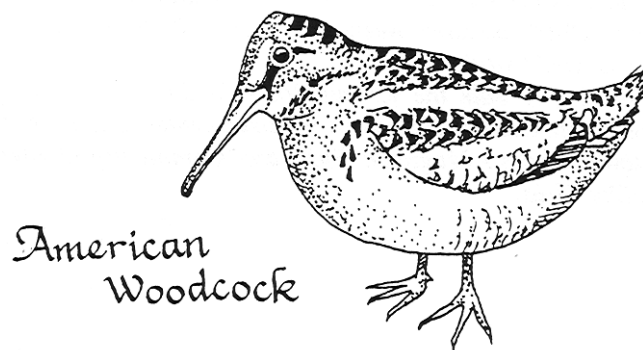
Meadow near the western edge and the Bikeway. The peat is over 20 feet thick here. Further northeast along the trail, one can observe both wooded and shrub swamps. Marsh and forest habitats are also encountered along the trail.

Raccoon, rabbit, skunk and fox can be found here. Ninety six species of birds have been sighted, including barn swallow, willow flycatcher, northern harrier, blue-winged warbler, yellow warbler, marsh wren, red-tailed hawk, ring-necked pheasant, the woodcock and many others. More than 50 species nest in the Great Meadows.

Each year in early March, the woodcocks arrive from Georgia and Alabama. If one happens to be wandering near Infinity Pond at sunrise or twilight, one may see or hear the males in their courtship flights. Look for their silhouettes as they take off, zoom high into the sky and then cascade back down. It is easy to hear them as they twitter high above. The flights peak in early April but continue to the end of the month. For those who wish to pay the woodcocks a visit, try not to make your presence known or interfere unduly. Stand near the treeline, not out in the open, and be quiet.

For a copy of the 10 page "Guide to Great Meadows: A Walking Tour," or a complete bird list, write Citizens for Lexington Conservation, Inc., P.O. Box 292, Lexington, Massachusetts 02173.

[image: 41-1 American woodcock]



[image: 42-1 boot]



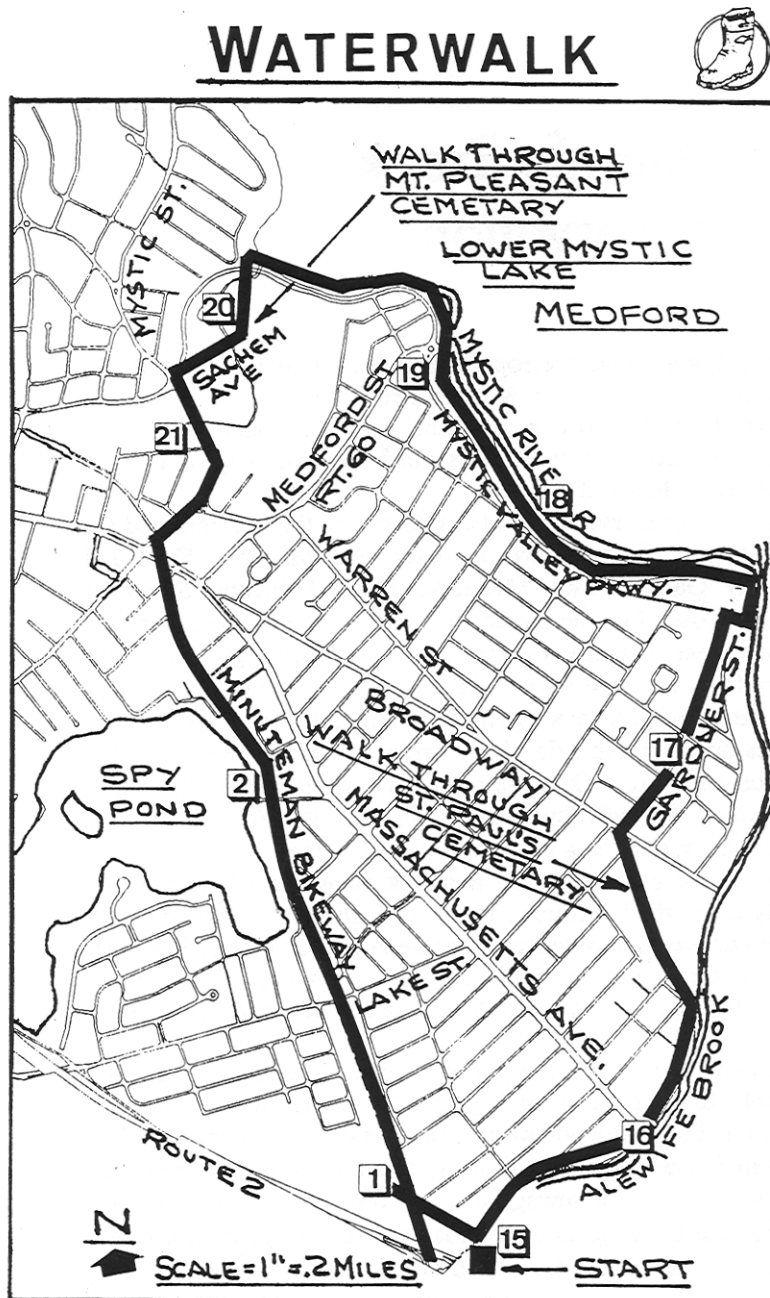
Waterwalk

The Waterwalk is a 3.0 mile walk along the Alewife Brook, Mystic River and a portion of Mill Brook which can become the basis for a 4.5 mile loop that includes the eastern portion of the Minuteman Bikeway.

Starting near Magnolia Field and Community Gardens and Thorndike Field, the Waterwalk leads one on a path along the Alewife Brook that encompasses Bicentennial Park at Massachusetts Avenue. Leaving the Alewife Brook Reservation and continuing north, one can visit the Prince Hall Cemetery, the oldest African-American owned Masonic cemetery in the country. Continuing on, the Mystic River Reservation is next encountered. A sidewalk makes for easy walking along this east flowing river that eventually merges into the Atlantic. Upon reaching the Lower Mystic Lake, one can follow its southern shore to the Mill Brook, then follow the Mill Brook to Cooke's Hollow, a still, restful place with an overlook to the brook.

For those who feel like taking a one-way walk, catch a bus from Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington center to the Alewife META station or visa versa. The #79 (leaves every 10-25 minutes on weekdays, no service Saturday, Sunday or holiday) or the #350 (leaves every 20-60 minutes weekdays, every 40-60 minutes on weekends) bus would work.

Those wishing to walk the 4.5 mile loop should continue along Mystic Street past Cooke's Hollow to the town center. The Bikeway can be followed east to Magnolia Field and Community Gardens and Thorndike Field.



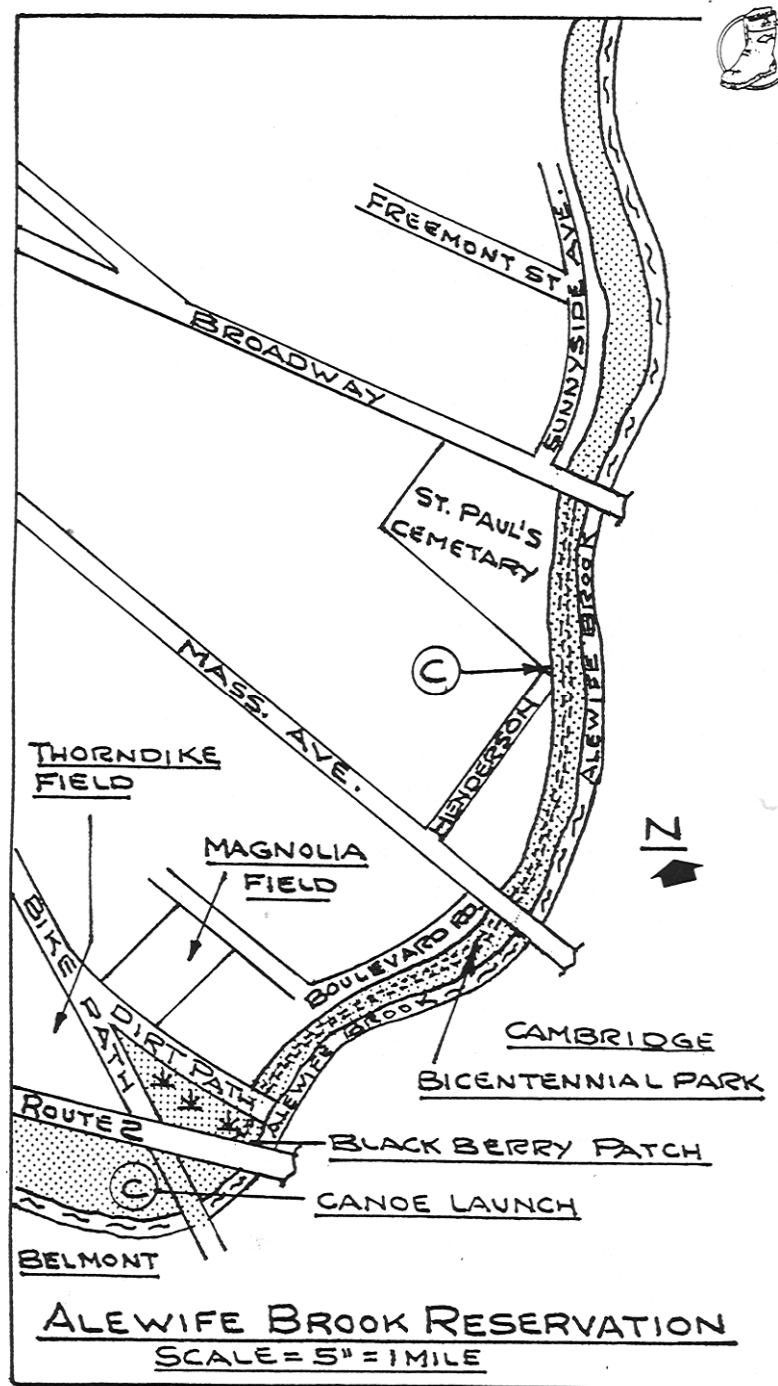
15 Alewife Brook Reservation

This 1.4 mile long Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) reservation runs beside the Alewife Brook on the east border of Arlington. It makes for a pleasant walk or canoe ride. The reservation is accessible to walkers north to Broadway only, a 1.0 mile walk from Route 2.

By bike, the reservation can be accessed on the southern end via the Minuteman Bikeway. By car, park near Magnolia Field and Community Gardens and Thorndike Field, Lafayette Street or Boulevard Road. On the north end of the reservation, park on Broadway near Marathon Street and walk through St. Paul's cemetery (hours limited until 4PM) or park on Henderson Street. For canoe put-ins, park on Henderson Street. A short path to the water lies on the north side of the bridge. Belmont residents often put-in from the Arthur D. Little company parking lot, but this needs to be verified by individuals. A put-in near the Alewife MBTA station exists, but this is a long walk with a canoe.

Some of the plants seen on the walk along the Alewife Brook (formerly called the Menotomy River) include northern white cedar, Japanese knotweed, burdock, plantain, heal-all, crabapple, white pine, clover, gray birch, elm, magnolia, tree-of-heaven, paper birch, tansy, sumac, willow, cattail and reed. Plus there's a blackberry patch near Route 2.

Sewage runoff from nearby towns has long been a problem for the Alewife Brook's water quality. In 1879, a special town meeting was called to discuss the pollution of the Alewife by Cambridge. The town wanted to unite with Medford to find a method to prevent the threatening nuisance of sewage and to preserve the public health. Cambridge put in tidegates near Broadway to control sewage flow. However, this caused the formation of a "malaria breeding



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grounds," and so the gatehouse was removed in 1900.¹⁴ Surface drains in North Cambridge still use the Alewife as an outlet. During the summer months, with little rainfall, water quality of the Alewife Brook was rated fair in 1988 by the Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection, Div. of Water Pollution Control.¹⁵ Problems were mostly due to low dissolved oxygen readings (dissolved oxygen is uncombined oxygen held in solution and available to aquatic organisms for respiration) and high fecal coliform counts, which were exacerbated "during rainfall from storm water runoff and combined sewage overflows (CSOs). CSOs are due to sewage pipes overfilled by storm water runoff. Storm water runoff includes urban runoff such as oil, gasoline, salt and sand as well as lawn care products. After a rain, the water quality was rated as poor. Since 1988, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Deer Island facilities have improved, allowing increased capacity for CSOs. However, in large storms, overflow into the Alewife still occurs.¹⁶

A hydrology study of the area is soon to be initiated by The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), a part of a "Wetlands Restoration and Banking Program." The Coalition for the Alewife, an Arlington-Cambridge-Belmont group, has been involved with issues related to the Alewife such as opposing the Route 2 highway expansion; call George Laite (646-5080) for information. The Alewife Brook is named after the alewife herring, which is typically 8-12 inches long and weighs about half a pound. Native American legend says that they were created by the Great Spirit of 14 Charles S. Parker, Town of Arlington, 1637-1907 (C.S. Parker & Son, Publishers, Arlington, 1907), p. 150.

14 Leslie K. O'Shea and Laurie E. Kennedy, "Little River/Alewif Brook Survey, 1988." (Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, Div. of Water Pollution Control Technical Services Branch, Westborough, MA, August, 1989).

15 "Leslie K. O'Shea and Laurie E. Kennedy, "Little River/Alewif Brook Survey, 1988," (Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, Div. of Water Pollution Control Technical Services Branch, Westborough, MA, August, 1989).

16 Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, System Master Plan: Proe:ram Baseline Water Ouality Assessment-Summary of Results and Conclusions, Charlestown, MA, March 31, 1994.



Manitou out of porcupine forebears since they are so boney, reported Phillips Brady, a biologist for the states Division of Marine Fisheries in Sandwich.¹⁷

Every year the alewife and blueback herring make a run from the Atlantic Ocean up the Mystic River to the Alewife Brook to spawn. The time of run depends on the water temperature. English traveler, William Wood, wrote in 1633 of the arrival of the alewives "in such multitudes as is almost incredible, pressing up such shallow waters as will scarce permit them to swim." One Massachusetts resident fancied he might have walked on their backs without getting his feet wet.¹⁸

Up until 1840, when Fresh Pond was still the source of the Alewife Brook, hundreds to thousands of herring continued to run the Mystic River Watershed. But Brady stated that the numbers of herring in 1993 were down 15% from the year before, and according to local observers, numbers now are greatly decreased even when compared to the 1980's.

The herring usually reach Earhart Dam on the Mystic River in Everett between mid-April and the end of May, and Little Pond between May 3 and June 19. As late as 1980, young herring were sighted swimming down the Alewife Brook from August through October. However, local observer Stew Sanders has not observed the young since then, and it is speculated that carp are eating many of the eggs and young. To learn more about the ecology of the Alewife Brook, consult the soon-to-be-published, *Alewife Ecology Guide*, by Stew Sanders of Belmont and Jim Connor of Arlington.

John Hay, a nature writer living on Cape Cod, described his fascination with the locating abilities of alewives and other natural beings: "With an assurance that came out of unending exchanges with space, the alewives, the bird migrants, even the local trees that swayed and changed with the rhythms of continental weather, would

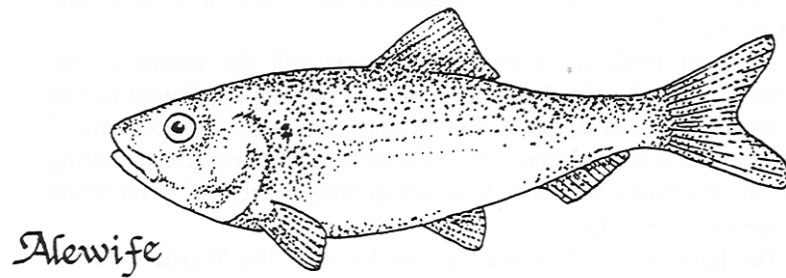
¹⁷ The Boston Globe, May 15, 1994, pp. 33-34.

¹⁸ William Cronon. *Changes in the Land*, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., Toronto, 1983, p.22. Excerpted from various historical writings.

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ask me as the seasonal tides went by, if I had learned where I was, and I had to answer: 'Not yet.'...Maps, it occurred to me, could not be read by the real pathfinders in this region. That alewives should migrate from some unknown distance at sea to a narrow waterway... was one of its best possible identifications... (The land is) constantly rediscovered and claimed by beings with universal guidelines. The one thing they could never do was devalue the place they lived in or returned to. That would surely mean the obliteration of their lives and their directional knowledge.¹⁹

[image: 48-1 alewife]



16 Bicentennial Park

A part of the Alewife Brook Reservation, this pleasantly landscaped park provides a restful interlude for shoppers on Massachusetts Avenue. It is located at the intersection of the Alewife Brook and Massachusetts Avenue on the Cambridge border.

¹⁹John Hay, "Homing," from Words from the Land, edited by Stephen Trimble (Peregrine Smith Books. Salt Lake City, 1989), p. 158.



To continue the Waterwalk at the end of the Alewife Brook Reservation path, walk through St. Paul's Cemetery to the exit on Broadway. Turn left onto Broadway and then right onto Gardner Street.

17 Prince Hall Cemetery

The oldest African-American owned Masonic cemetery in the country, the Prince Hall Cemetery is located on 0.2 acres in northeast Arlington on Gardner Street. Visitors may park on Gardner Street just after Michael Street. To enter the gate, reach around behind to pull up the pole that slides into the pavement.

The land here was farmed until 1856 when it was sold to an African-American Grand Master of the Masons. In 1864, the land was conveyed to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, which was named after Prince Hall, an African-American abolitionist and founder of the first African-American Masonic lodge in the country and located in Boston. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge used the land as a cemetery since white cemeteries were off-limits for people of color. Eight people were buried here, but by 1875 the cemetery had been neglected and abandoned.

In 1958, the town agreed to maintain the property. Restoration of the site began in 1985 with funds from the town, the Arlington Historical Society and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge. From 1988- 1989, archeologist Dr. Mary Beaudry of Boston University researched the names of those buried here. One large monument now commemorates the site and one or two original stone markers still exist. An application to register as a national historic landmark has been submitted. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Dorchester owns the site.

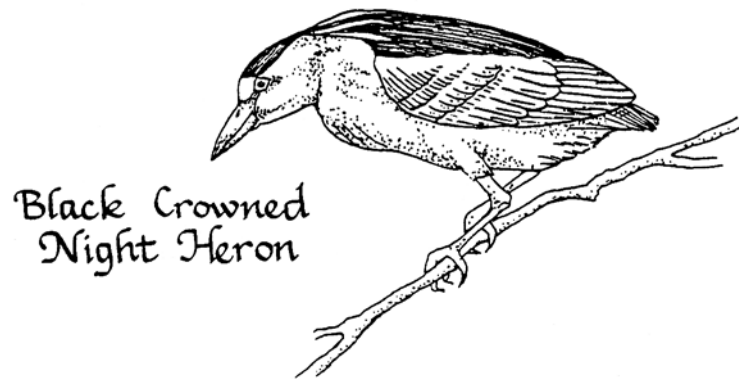
To continue the Waterwalk, continue north on Gardner Street. Follow to the end and turn right onto Decatur Street. Turn left onto Arizona Terrace and go to the end.

18 Mystic River Reservation

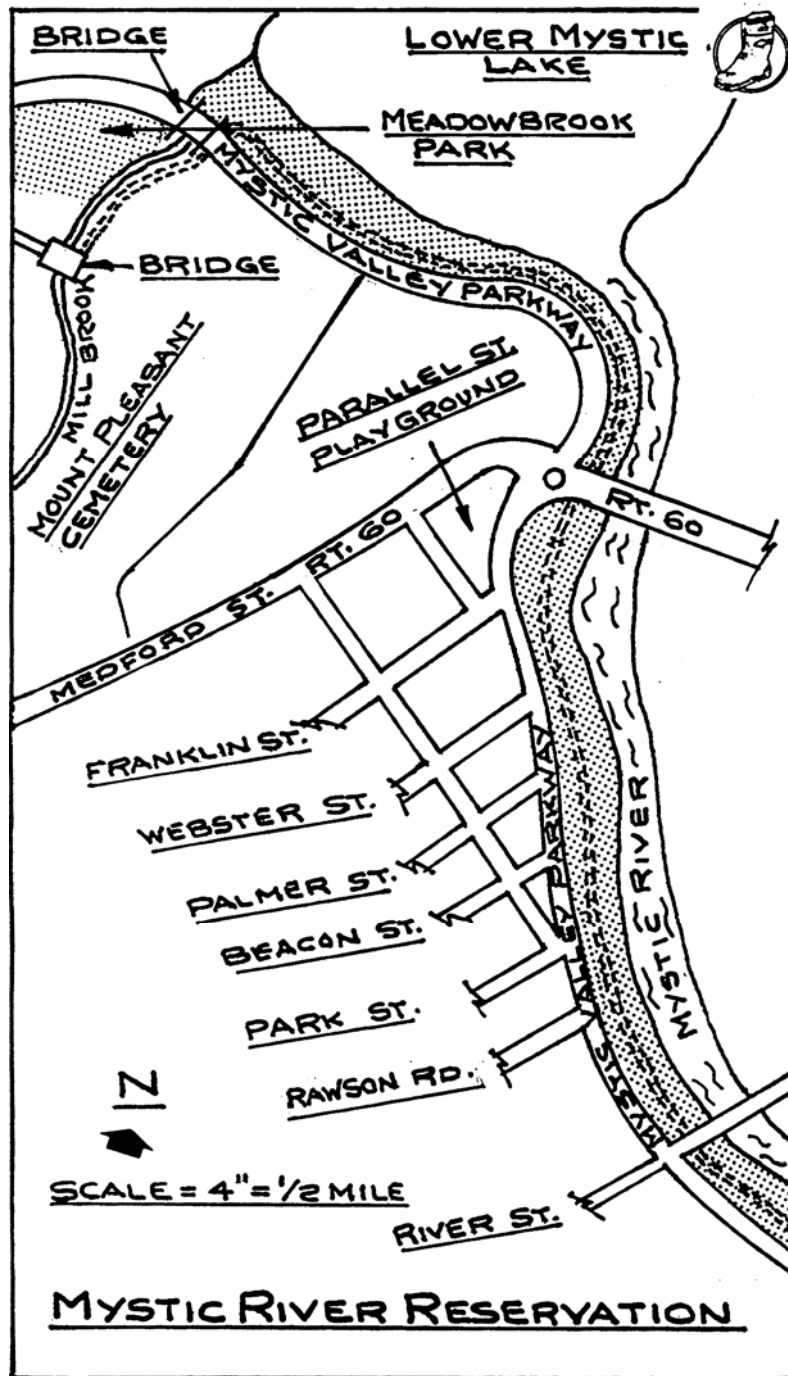
This MDC reservation stretches 1.2 miles along the Mystic River from the Alewife Brook to the Mill Brook at the southwestern corner of the Lower Mystic Lake. It offers both dirt path and sidewalk along a grassy way lining the river.

Along the walk, look for alder, apple, green ash, gray birch, paper birch, cherry, silky dogwood, linden, Norway maple, red maple, black oak, red oak and Austrian pine trees. Also look for chickory, Japanese knotweed, red clover, dandelion, poison ivy, butter and eggs, tansy, goldenrod, aster, white clover, buttercup, yellow iris, purple loosestrife and yarrow. Birds one may see include wood duck, mute swan, American coot, mallard, pintail, Canada goose, scaup, cormorant, black-crowned night heron and kingbird.

[image: 50-1black crowned night heron]



[image: 51-1 mystic river reservation map]



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The river makes a perfect continuation for a canoe ride from the Alewife Brook to the Mystic Lakes (see the Alewife Brook Reservation for canoe put-in points). Jim Connor of the Mystic River Watershed Association wrote of his experience canoeing the Mystic: "I was amazed at how quiet it was during the first part of our trip on the narrow upper river in spite of the traffic on the Mystic Valley Parkway that encroaches on its banks. Modern life was teeming just beyond our gunwales, yet we seemed to be in another world. There was a peacefulness here .that many people seek by traveling to distant places. Remarkably, we did not see another canoe on the river." (excerpted from *The Boston Globe*, March 14, 1993)

[image: 52-1 yellow iris]



19 Parallel Street Playground

This property is owned by the MDC and is located at the intersection of the Mystic Valley Parkway and Mystic Street. Access is via Parallel Street. From the Mystic River, walk to High Street (Route 60), where the playground can be seen on the south side of the Mystic Valley Parkway. Follow High Street to Parallel Street.



To continue the Waterwalk, follow the Mystic River to the Lower Mystic Lake and continue until the Mill Brook culvert is reached. Cross the Mystic Valley Parkway and enter the Mount Pleasant Cemetery via a path around the culvert and through the chain-link fence.

20 Meadowbrook Park

[image: 53-1 observation only]



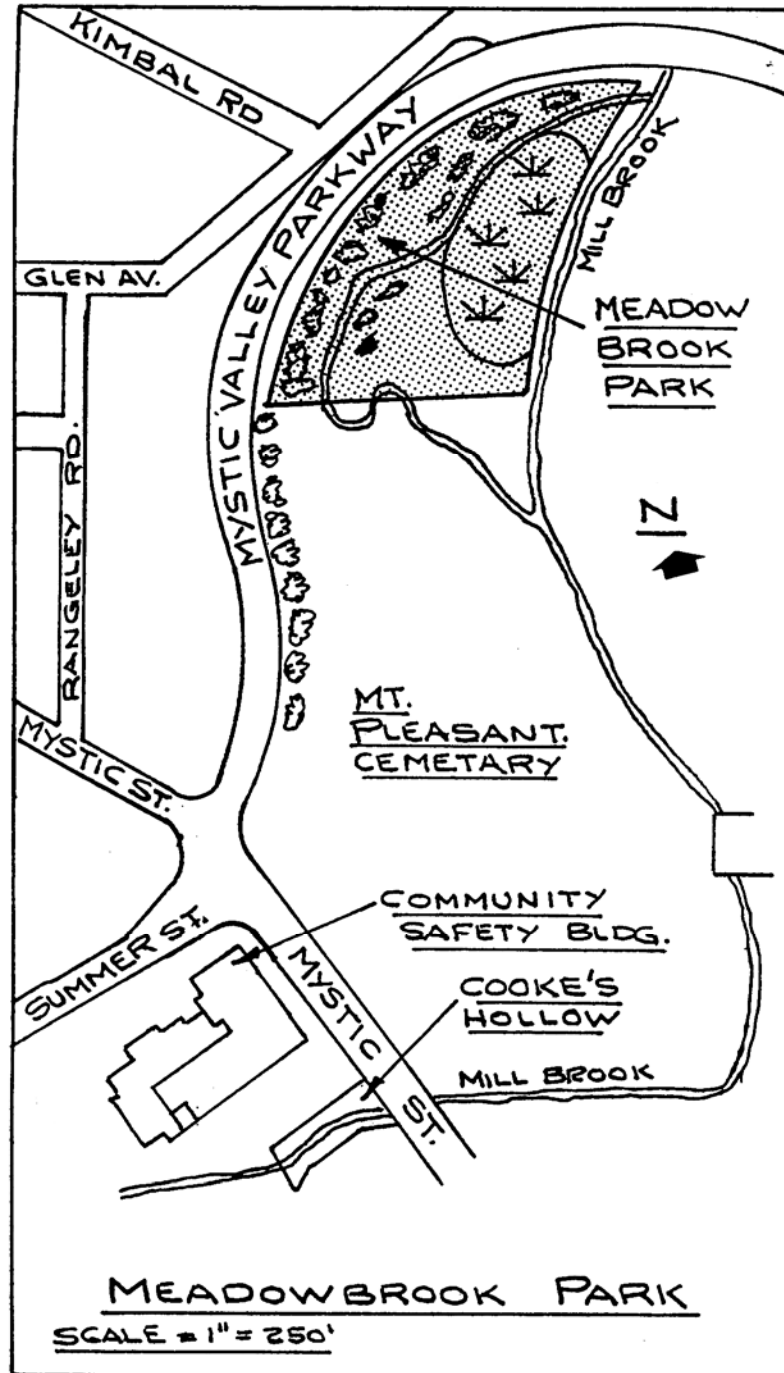
This land was set aside as a park in 1896 under Massachusetts Legislative Act 267. To reach the site by car or bike, take Sachem Avenue off Mystic Street and ride through the cemetery to the bridge over Mill Brook.

The three acre wetland is difficult to traverse, but is easily viewed from the cemetery, and is part of a lovely, long walk following Mill Brook from the Mystic River to Cooke's Hollow. To determine the southern boundary, walk along the cemetery road that parallels the brook. Orange spray paint on the chain link fence presently marks the east end of the southern boundary; Look across the park, across the Mystic Valley Parkway, and a street lamp nears the south boundary on the west side of the park. Officially, a stone marker is the locator for the southwestern corner of the property, and can be found in the woods near the Mystic Valley Parkway. A study of Meadowbrook Park was recently initiated and will include a survey.

Apparently, the brook used to run straight north into the Mystic Lake, but years ago someone repeatedly blocked the flow in this direction, forcing most of the water to run west and then along the Mystic Valley Parkway until it met up with the Lower Mystic Lake. Now only a slight depression and flow of water follows the old north route. Most of the flow encircles a marsh area that is vegetated by reed (*Phragmites spp.*) and cattail. Growing near the marsh are green ash, cherry, cottonwood, elm, forsythia, hawthorn, Japanese

[image: 54-1 meadowbrook park map]

[NOTE: Map has some misspellings – Kimball and Cemetery]



[image: 55-1 common mugwort]



knotweed, black locust, ashleaf maple, Norway maple, red maple, mugwort, wild red raspberry, sumac, tree-of-heaven and willow. The land was acquired from the Park and Recreation Commission by the Conservation Commission in 1975 at no cost.

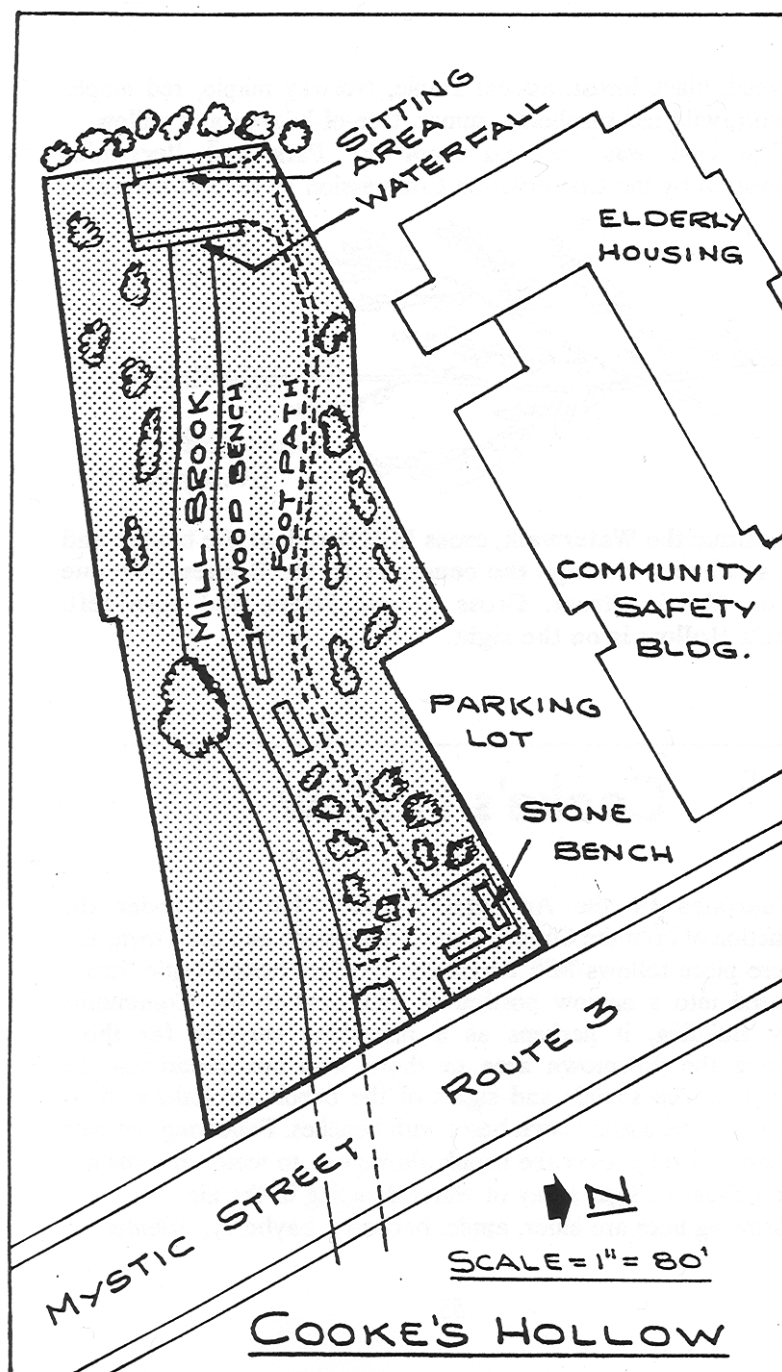
To continue the Waterwalk, cross Mill Brook at the bridge and walk southwest through the cemetery to the Sachem Avenue exit on Mystic Street. Cross Mystic Street and turn left. Cooke's Hollow is on the right.

21 Cooke's Hollow

Cultivated by the Arlington Garden Club and under the jurisdiction of both the Conservation Commission and the Town, this 0.8 acre piece follows Mill Brook for 350 feet from Mystic Street. Squeezed into a narrow portion of land next to the Community Safety Building, it harkens as a refreshing surprise for those exploring the downtown area or those who are continuing the Waterwalk. The sounds and sights of the brook are enhanced by shade trees and a grass lawn beset with benches. Following the path upstream, a bridge over the brook allows one to watch the rushing water amidst the light spray of water dangling in the air.

Growing here are alder, apple, barberry, bayberry, oriental

[image: 56-1 cooke's hollow map]

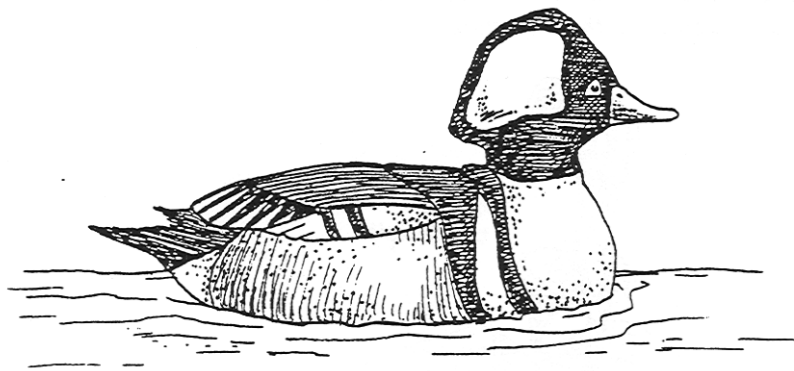


bittersweet, cornelian cherry, tee crabapple, flowering dogwood, elm, alwood forsythia, double scarlet hawthorn, Japanese knotweed, mountain laurel, black locust, white pine, summer sweetbush and willow.

The land was acquired in 1991 from Boston Edison (for \$2500) and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston (as a gift). \$1250 came from the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources Self- Help Program.

To continue the Waterwalk 4.5 mile loop, stay on Mystic Street to the town center. Cross Massachusetts Avenue and turn left. Turn right in one block onto Swan Place. The Minuteman Bikeway is on the left. Follow the bikeway east to Magnolia Field and Community Gardens and Thorndike Field.

[image: 57-1 hooded merganser]



Hooded Merganser

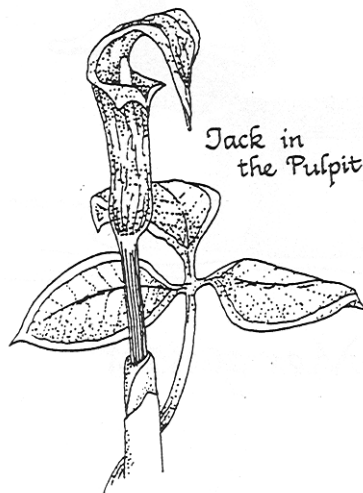
[image: 58-1 large boot]



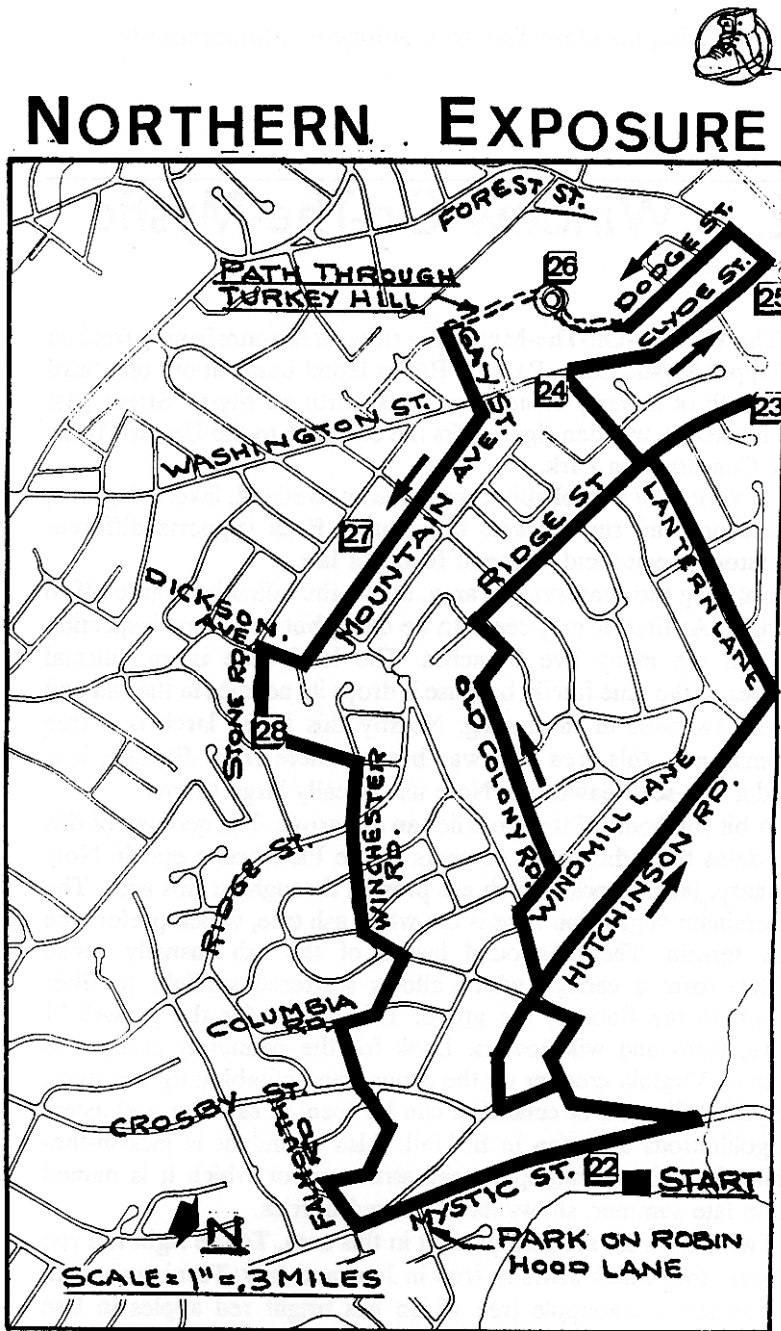
Northern Exposure

The Northern Exposure loop entails a 3.5 mile walk past lake, marsh and woods. From the low elevation of the Window-on-the-Mystic to high of the Turkey Hill Reservation, it offers a variety of scenes for the traveler. Those interested in historical architecture have the option of looking at the oldest surviving house in Arlington, the Fowle-Reed-Wyman-Belcher house, built around 1706. Starting at the Window-on-the-Mystic on the Upper Mystic Lake, the route climbs via two optional routes up to the neighborhood Ridge Street Conservation Land. It passes the small Mohawk Road Conservation Land on its way to the marshy Forest Street Conservation Land on the Winchester border. It then wends its way back through the Turkey Hill Reservation, a 12 acre wooded site, past the Pheasant Avenue Playground and Stone Road Conservation Land, a small neighborhood parcel, to the beginning.

[image: 58-2 jack in the pulpit]



[image: 59-1 northern exposure map]



22 Window-On-The-Mystic

The Window-On-The-Mystic is a three acre waterfront parcel on the Upper Mystic Lake. Park on Robin Hood Lane, about one third mile north of Beverly Road, then walk north on Mystic Street past four houses. A wooden sign marks the entrance to the Upper Mystic Lake Conservation Park.

A variety of microhabitats are present: wetland, lake, ash grove, oak-hickory and sugar maple dominated. Each supports different understory species and different forms of life.

Entering the conservation area, notice the fallen larch tree off to the right. At first, it may seem to be dead, but on closer inspection one will see many live branches. The larch tree is an unusual member of the pine family because it drops its needles in the fall and grows new ones in the spring. Nearby this fallen larch is a tree uncommon to this area that was brought here from Europe; it is called a one-seed hawthorn. Note its typically large thorns.

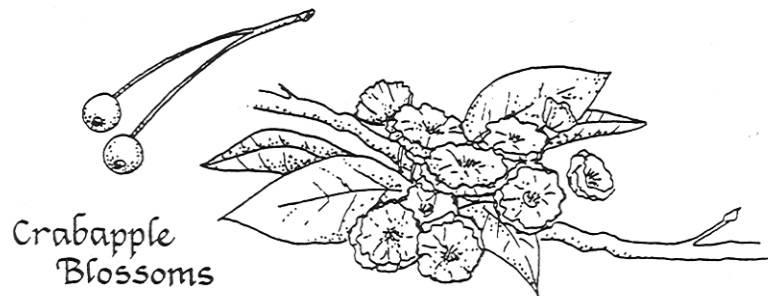
A bit southeast of the larch lies an ash grove. The geology of this area dates back thousands of years to the Pleistocene epoch. Note the sharp, jagged rocks which are present throughout this area. The predominant vegetation here is the white ash tree, which prefers the rocky terrain. The compound leaves of the ash (usually seven leaflets) form a canopy which allows scattered sunlight to filter through to the floor of the grove. This allows for the growth of shrubs, ferns and wildflowers. Look for the palmately compound leaves of Virginia creeper on the ground and climbing up the trees. The yellow flowers of celandine can be seen all summer and asters and goldenrods are seen in the fall. Also abundant is jack-in-the-pulpit which, in spring, sports the structure for which it is named and, in late summer, shows its bright red berries.

Two fruit trees are also present in this area. To the right is a red mulberry tree which bears its fruit in June and July. Turning around, one can see a crabapple tree which has bright red apples in late summer.

[image: 61-1 boot icon]



[image: 61-2 crabapple blossoms]



Sitting quietly, one may see chipmunks scurrying along the ground and robins, catbirds, kinglets, warblers and blue jays darting in and out among the branches.

Somewhat further south along the inland trail, the vegetation changes to the oak-hickory forest typical of dry areas in the northeast. One can see the whole spectrum of oaks in this area. Note the rounded lobes of the white oak, the pointed lobes of the northern red oak and the combination of the two. The distinction between different oaks can be difficult to make.

During the winter, notice the dried up brown leaves on the oak trees. Oaks are historically southern trees and they have not yet acquired the characteristic of dropping their leaves, as have maples, elms and birches. The hickories here include bittersweet, shagbark, and shellbark. They all have similar compound leaves. In the fall, this area is very active with squirrels and chipmunks gathering nuts for the winter.

At the end of the trail a stand of sumacs can be seen. Two different kinds are present here: smooth sumac, with its hairless branches, and staghorn sumac, with its fuzzy antler-like young branches. Both kinds have long, compound leaves with up to 31 leaflets.

Along the shore path, about even with the entry point to the conservation area, some of the most common ferns of New England are found. The light green fronds of the sensitive fern can be seen here. Farther off to the side are the lacy fronds of lady fern and the

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

tall fronds of interrupted fern. Notice the different ways in which each fern makes spores to produce the next generation.

Along the water side of the path are the thorny Japanese barberry shrub which bears bright red berries in the fall. Also, notice the delicately compounded leaves of the dull-leaf indigo bush along the water's edge. Both solomon's seal and false solomon's seal are abundant. An unusual plant called turtle-head shows its white and pink blossoms in the fall.

Continuing south on the shore path, visitors are offered an opportunity to learn how to identify poison ivy. Looking closely at the large tree to the right, one will see that the green leaves on it really belong to a poison ivy vine which has overtaken the tree. This plant is poisonous to the touch at all times of the year. Learn its typical three-leaved arrangement and its aerial roots so that you can identify it in winter. The large tree to the left is a basswood or linden. This tree has large heart-shaped leaves and in summer has fragrant yellow flowers. In the fall, notice the specialized leaves (bracts) which act as parachutes to carry the attached seeds to the ground.

Walking north on the shore path, one can appreciate a full panorama of the area, the steep slope above leading down to the Upper Mystic Lake. The formation of the lake occurred during the glacial period and is characteristic of a kettle hole. This phenomenon occurred when a large ice mass becomes embedded in an outwash plain (debris left by the glacier). The ice mass then melted and a lake formed. The steep, rocky slope is also typical of glacial activity.

The wildlife of the Upper Mystic Lake is always subject to the dangers of pollution from street runoff, lawn fertilizers and other sources upstream. Trout are no longer found in the lake because of these dangers. Many insects which are food for the fish, amphibians and birds are very sensitive to pollution and if they disappear then the others will soon follow. Yellow perch, minnows and possibly pickerel are present. Frogs and turtles may also be seen along the shore. Mallards and black ducks can often be seen swimming near the shore and in the warm months eastern kingbirds may be seen darting above the water catching insects.

Continuing north along the shore -- The recognition of wetland

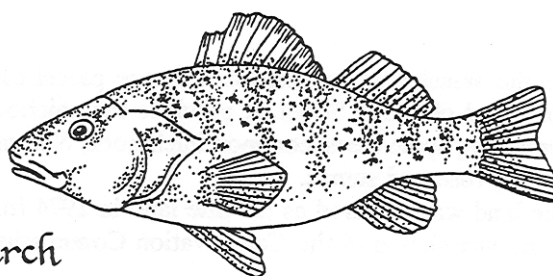


plants is very important because they indicate areas where water is present during some part of the year. One reason this is important is for flood control. Where these plants and others are present, it is imperative that these lands be kept undeveloped by new residences and industry so that excess water can be absorbed. Some wetland indicator plants are present here. Purple loosestrife has showy spikes which can create purple carpets over large wet areas. Yellow iris and red maple are also typical plants of wet places. Other common plants in moist soils are swamp milkweed, jewelweed and cut-leaved water horehound.

Almost on the northern edge of the property, one will notice how dense the canopy is. How does it compare with that of the ash grove? The trees which make up this canopy are sugar maples whose leaves are more densely arranged than those of the ash. The ground is sparsely covered, mostly with the basal leaves of Virginia creeper. Without sunlight, few plants can survive at the ground level. At the northern edge of the property, a large stand of Japanese knotweed looks like a stand of bamboo. Notice the large, rounded thicket of roses. What a marvelous home for cottontail rabbits! Behind the thicket is a large stand of jewelweed and beyond that is a sugar maple grove.

The parcel was purchased in 1975 for \$120,800. Partial funding was obtained from federal Special Revenue Sharing Funds (\$30,000) and the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources (\$60,400). The land is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

[image: 63-1 yellow perch]



Yellow Perch

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To continue the Northern Exposure walk, continue north on Mystic Street (Route 3). Turn left onto Old Mystic Street. Take the first right onto Winchester Road for a good view. Take the first right again onto Hutchinson Road. (To see the oldest surviving house in Arlington, do this instead: From Old Mystic Street, take the second right onto Hutchinson Road. The Fowle-Reed- Wyman-Belcher house built ca.1706 stands on the corner.)

For a quiet, low traffic suburban walk- from Hutchinson Road, take a left onto Momingside Drive. Turn right onto Windmill Lane then left onto Old Colony Road. Follow this to the end, turn left onto Cherokee Road and follow to the end. Turn right onto Ridge Street and follow to the end.

For a walk with a view, stay on Hutchinson Road. Turn left onto Lantern Lane and follow to Ridge Street. Turn right onto Ridge Street and follow to the end.

23 Ridge Street Conservation land

On the Winchester border, this 0.6 acre parcel can be found at the north end of Ridge Street. It provides the neighborhood with a site containing apple trees, common buckthorn, Norway maple, oak, white pine, rose and sumac.

The land was acquired as tax title land in 1974 for no cost. It is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.



To continue the Northern Exposure walk, return to Ridge Street and walk south. Turn right onto Mohawk Road and follow to the end. The next parcel is on the left.

24 Mohawk Road Conservation Land

This small 0.1-acre area consists of two triangular parcels at the intersection of Washington Street and Mohawk Road. Bounded on the north by roads and on the south by Arlington Gas and Light Co., this area is not easily used for recreation, but serves an ecological purpose by allowing vegetation and wildlife a place to grow relatively undisturbed. The area is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

To continue the Northern Exposure Walk, turn right onto Washington Street and follow it to the end. Turn right onto Forest Street. The Forest Street Conservation Land is on the right at the Winchester border.

25 Forest Street Conservation Land



Located on the Winchester line, this one-acre marsh is populated mainly with reed (*Phragmites spp.*). Because it is a marsh, it is

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difficult to walk through. Those who wish to visit the site via car had best park on nearby Dunster Street away from traffic.

This land was acquired in 1972 for \$5500. \$2750 came from the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources Self-Help Program. The area is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

To continue the Northern Exposure Walk, reverse direction on Forest Street. Follow Forest Street south to Dodge Street. Turn left onto Dodge Street and follow to the end. Entering the Turkey Hill Reservation from the northwest, meander now to the southeast corner.

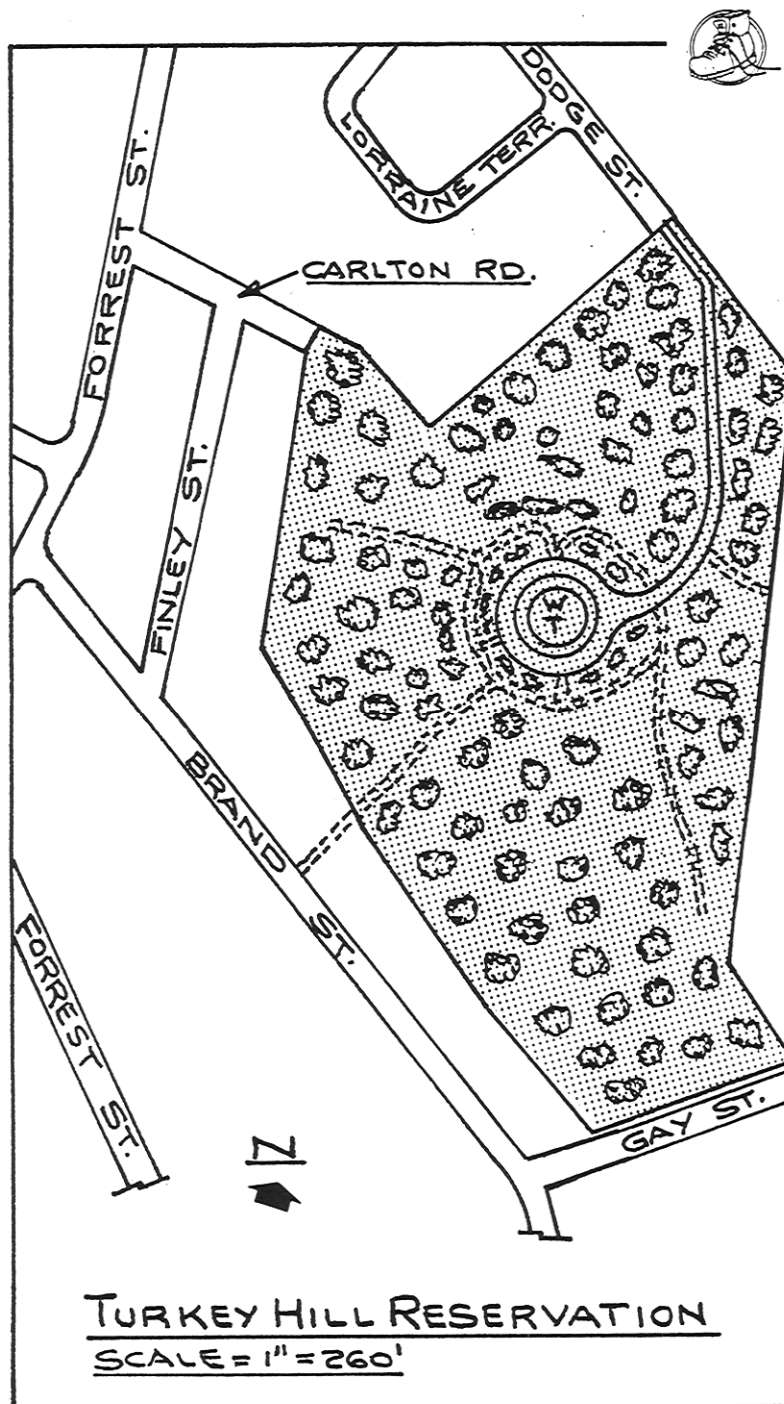
26 Turkey Hill Reservation and Brand Street Conservation Land

Those who are lucky will hear the Turkey Hill Minstrel on this 12 acre wooded site that lies high atop a hill in the northwest portion of town. He lives in the neighborhood and comes here to walk his dog- and also to sing. He calls Turkey Hill a "little wilderness," and remembers when old car bodies littered the site. These were cleaned up on Earth Day in 1990.

The best access to the reservation is from Forest Street. From Forest Street, take either Brand Street (see next paragraph) or Dodge Street to Turkey Hill. Approaching Turkey Hill from the east, there is a path from Gay Street. A path also exists next to 329 Washington Street, but parking is limited on weekdays to 7-10AM or 3-6PM.

Although most of Turkey Hill is under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission, the Conservation Commission also

[image: 67-1 turkey hill map]



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owns two small pieces of land on Brand Street that can be used to access the reservation. One of these pieces is to the left of 72 Brand Street. It is narrow, leading up from three concrete steps at the street. The other piece is a 25 foot wide parcel beginning 10 feet to the right of the house at 36 Brand Street. One must walk around a shed or through a patio here.

In 1898, The Appalachian Mountain Club wrote a description of Turkey Hill: "Here is a rocky tip well shaded, but sufficiently open to disclose a wide prospect of town and country below. At the left lies Arlington in its fine setting; in front are fair fields, woodlands, hill, and vales, and beyond the outlines of distant mountain tops; at the right, stretches of woods, here and there broken by pastures and well-tilled farms. It is a less extensive view than that from the loftier Arlington Heights, but more diversified. The hill is used by the Signal Service. It is called Turkey Hill from the fact that once wild turkeys abounded here with other game, and it was a favorite hunting-ground."²⁰

Some of the plants now found here are white ash, gray birch, paper birch, blueberry, cherry, forsythia, bitternut hickory, shagbark hickory, winterberry holly, maleberry, black oak, red oak, scrub oak, white oak, red pine, white pine, wild red raspberry, multiflora rose and staghorn sumac.

[image: 68-1 highbush blueberry]



²⁰Edwin Bacon, Walks and Rides in the Country Round About Boston, p. 28.



To continue the Northern Exposure walk, exit Turkey Hill from a path leading out of the southeast corner onto Gay Street. Turn left onto Gay Street and follow one block. Cross Washington Street and enter Mountain Avenue. The Pheasant Avenue Playground will be on the right.

27 Pheasant Avenue Playground

The Pheasant Avenue Playground is located at the Stratton School, 180 Mountain Avenue.

To continue on the Northern Exposure walk, stay on Mountain Avenue until coming to a crossroads with a tall, dead stump on the left. Turn right here onto Dickson Avenue (unmarked). Turn left onto Stone Road. The Stone Road Conservation Land will be on the right.

28 Stone Road Conservation Land

This is a small neighborhood parcel north of Symmes Hospital. It includes 275 feet of road frontage across from 24 Stone Road. Overlooking Yerxa Street, it is a grassy area containing rose, sumac and poke. Plans are in the works to landscape the parcel. The land

is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

To continue the Northern Exposure walk, continue north on Stone Road. Take the first right onto Winchester Road. Stay on Winchester Road for four or five blocks to Bradley Road. Turn right onto Bradley and stay on Bradley Road to the end. Turn right onto Columbia Road. Take the first left onto Falmouth Road and follow to the end. Turn left onto Mystic Street (Route 3). This will bring one back to Robin Hood Road and the Window-on-the-Mystic.

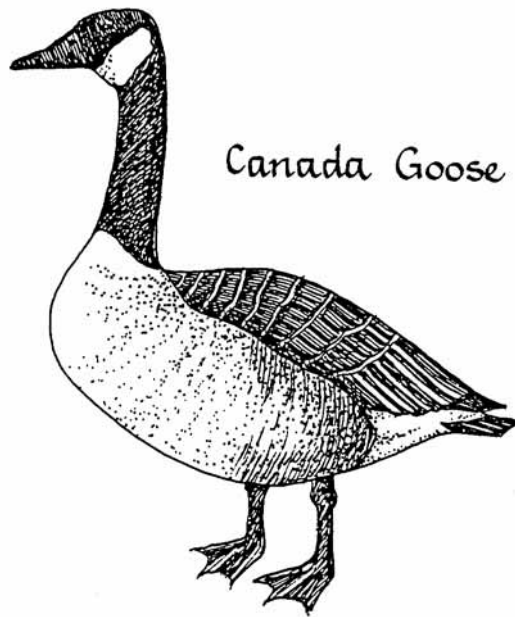
[image: 71-1 footprint glyph]



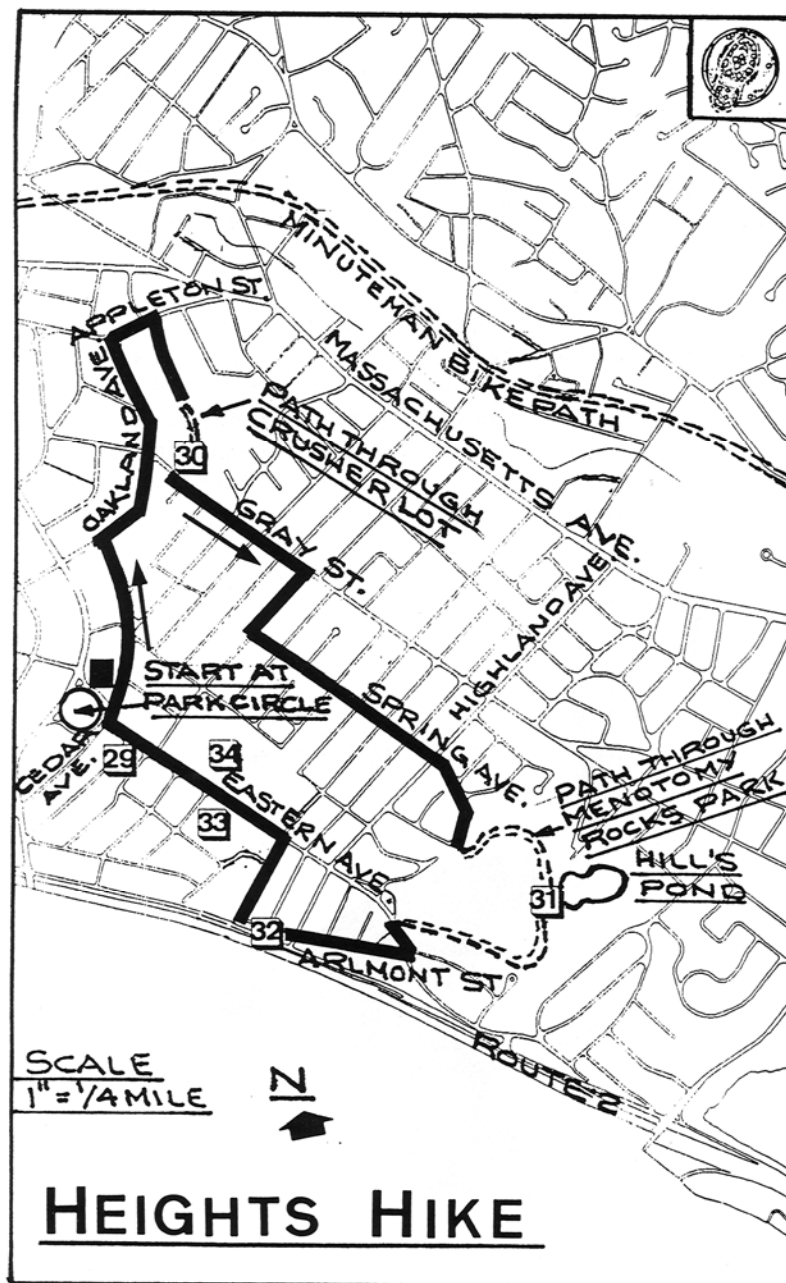
Heights Hike

The Heights Hike takes one from highway to heaven along a 2.8 mile route that passes the small Concord Turnpike Conservation Land and climbs to the highest elevation in Arlington at Park Circle. Robbins Farm in the heights affords a panoramic view of the Boston Basin below. The route also wanders through two wooded areas, the largest wooded area in the bounds of Arlington, Menotomy Rocks Park, and the smaller Crusher Lot.

[image: 71-2 canada goose]



[image: 72-1 heights map]



29 Park Circle

Located at 377 feet, the highest elevation in Arlington, this small, grassy area hosts a water tower that is now a historic landmark. This 1.5 acre area is found at the intersection of Park Avenue and Park Circle in Arlington Heights. Two majestic Norway maples guard the sidewalk entrance to the water tower. Other trees include paper birch, cherry, black oak and pitch pine.

Although the land surrounding the water tower is under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission, the water tower is operated by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and holds two million gallons of water. The tower's facade was designed to replicate a Greek temple.

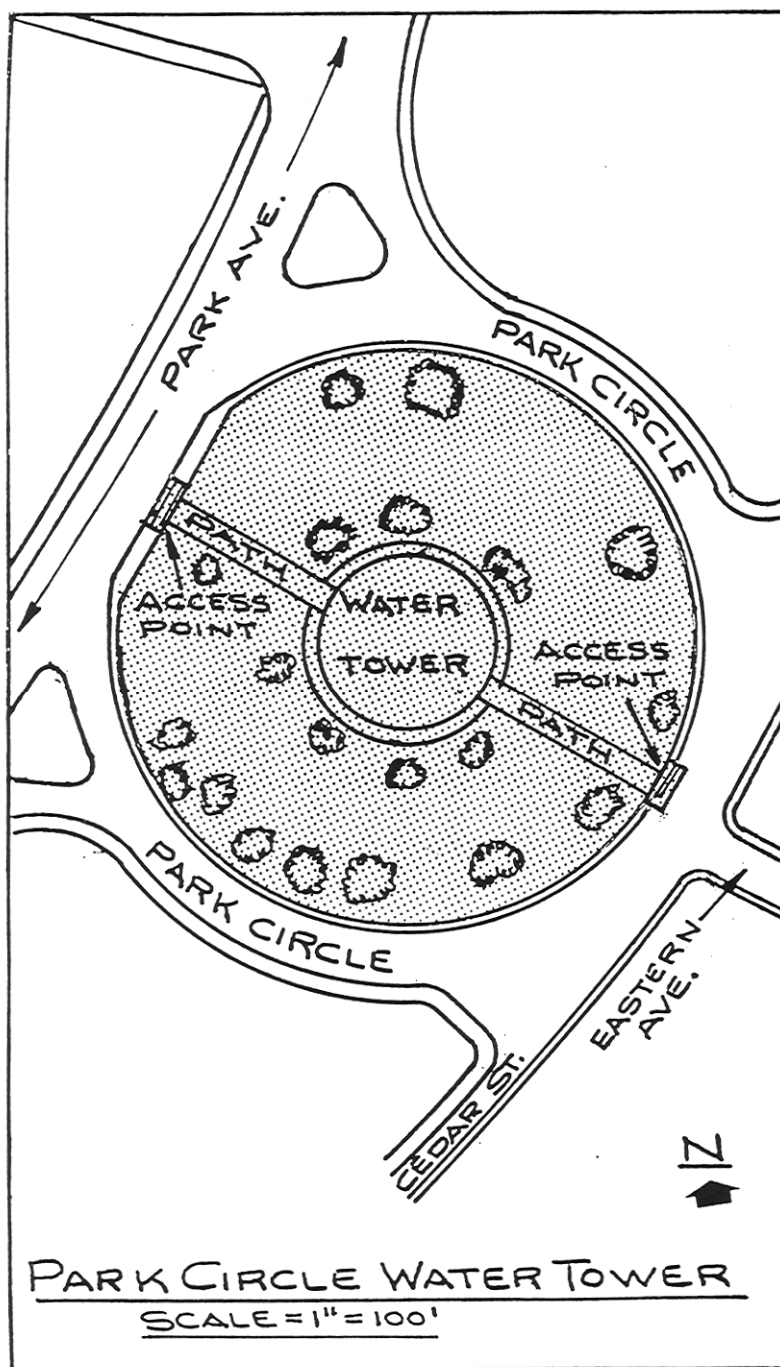
The town and MWRA open up the water tower to the public about once a year, usually drawing a large crowd. This event is sometimes coordinated with Town Day or Earth Day celebrations. Residents may climb up the many stairs to the top of the tower for a grand panorama of Boston and virtually all of Arlington as well.

On a spring day, the cherry trees that surround the water tower are in full bloom, making a trip to this park well worthwhile.

[image: 73-1 norway maple]



[image: 74-1 park circle water tower]



To continue the Heights Hike, find Cedar Street on the northeast corner of Park Circle. Take Cedar to the end. Turn right onto Oakland Avenue and continue to the end of the street. Turn right onto Appleton Street, and again at the first right onto Harvard Street. At the end of the street, follow a path into the northwest corner of the Crusher Lot.

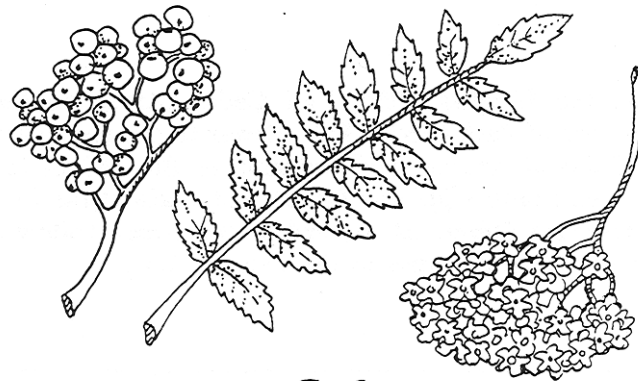
30 Crusher Lot

The Crusher Lot is a 6-acre wooded area located in Arlington Heights at the intersection of Gray Street and Oakland Avenue. It is part of the Ottoson Junior High School property, but has been allowed to remain in its natural state. It can be accessed from either Oakland Avenue or Gray Street, or by foot, from behind the Ottoson Junior High School.

A paved footpath extends down through the center of this hilly, rectangular shaped property, and dirt footpaths wind throughout the lot. Many large oak trees can be found, but it is also populated by other tree species such as the gray and paper birch that are randomly sprinkled throughout its four borders. In the approximate center of this hilly property is a good-sized, relatively flat knoll that has been cleared of trees, making it a perfect spot for a weekend family picnic. On the lower side of the knoll is a grouping of several granite boulders to rest upon. Looking north from this clearing, when the trees are not foliated, one can see the ridge that bounds Arlington beyond Summer Street.

In the northeast corner is a concrete diversion waterway lined with stone that is meant to capture and divert fast flowing rainwater that can rush down the hill's steep slope and cause flooding on the Ottoson playing field. A concrete stairway is also here, leading to the field. Adjacent to the stairway is an aging stone water catch basin in disrepair.

[image: 76-1 mountain ash]



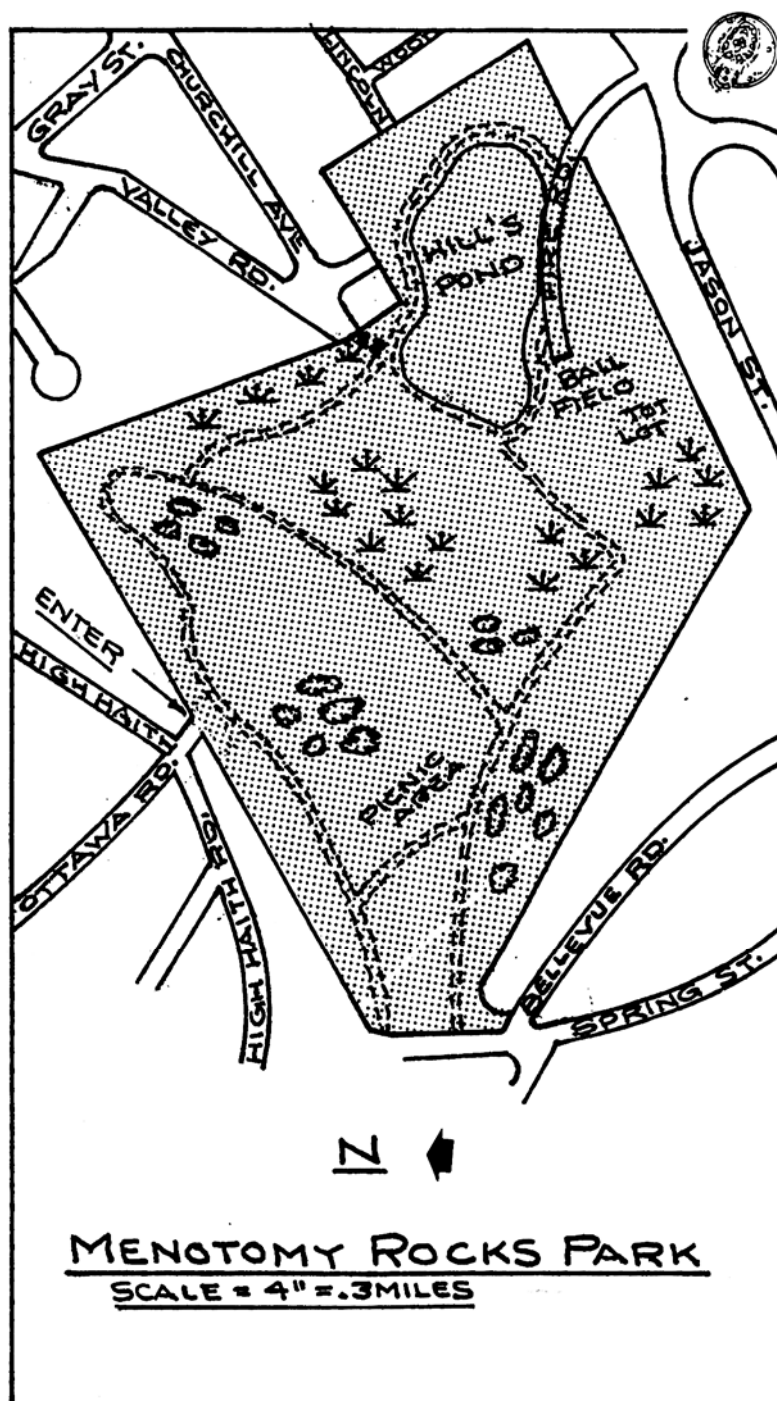
Mountain Ash

To continue the Heights Hike, exit the Crusher Lot on the south side at Gray Street. Turn left onto Gray Street and continue approximately four blocks. Turn right onto Grandview Road. Immediately after 24 Grandview Road, turn left onto Spring Avenue (unmarked). Spring Avenue becomes a path at times. After seven blocks, cross Highland Avenue and the street becomes High Haith Road. Follow High Haith as it bends to the right. At the end, turn left onto Ottawa Road. The entrance to the west side of Menotomy Rocks Park is here.

31 Menotomy Rocks Park and Spring Street Conservation Land

Menotomy Rocks Park is the largest, natural, wooded area within the boundaries of Arlington. Under the jurisdiction of the Park and

[image: 77-1 menotomy rocks park]



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Recreation Commission and comprising 34 acres, it includes Hill's Pond, two grassy areas, picnic facilities and a small playground. The Conservation Commission also maintains 1,590 square feet on the south side of the park on Spring Street. This woody area is approximately 100 feet by 15 feet and is across from 120 Spring Street near Bellevue Road.

Menotomy Rocks Park is in the Jason Heights area. Parking is possible at the foot of Churchill Avenue on the north side of the park or across from 120 Spring Street on the southwest side. Pedestrians may also enter from Jason Street or Ottawa Road. Most of the land was set aside as a park in 1896 by Massachusetts Legislative Act 267. The park was once part of a farm owned by George Hill, a crusty local sort, after whom the pond is named. In 1993-1994, Hill's Pond was dredged. A drain and retention area were installed at this time to filter sediments and storm-water runoff.

Elevation in the park rises from 130 feet at Hill's Pond to 200 feet on the rocks on the west side. An intermittent stream runs through the southeast corner. A variety of plants can be found, including white ash, highbush blueberry, buttonbush, cherry, currant, dangleberry, forsythia, bitternut hickory, shagbark hickory, hophornbeam, lily-of-the-valley, linden, whorled loosestrife, Norway maple, red maple, sugar maple, sycamore maple, European mountain ash, black oak, white oak, Russian olive, white pine, pipsissewa, sarsaparilla, sassafras, false solomon's seal and maple leaf viburnum and willow. Birds such as nuthatches, herons, Canada geese, hawks and yellow-rumped warblers have been observed.

[image: 78-1 lily of the valley]





This prized site must be taken care of properly. Cleanups of human litter are terrific, but please leave the forest litter behind. Cleaning up the sticks and branches removes energy sources from the forest detritus cycle as well as removing wildlife habitat. The sticks and branches also prevent people from wandering off the path. When people traverse an area, it's difficult for plants to grow. Not only do people crush the plants, but they compact the soil, preventing plant growth. A beautiful pipsissewa patch exists only in a portion of the park that is difficult to traverse. More of this wonderful species and others could be found if people obeyed these principles.

An historical tidbit- Thirty six years ago, Old Marty Reid found a piece of driftwood tossed aside from a dredging of Hill's Pond (yes, they did it back then, too). A florist by trade, it reminded him of a "ming tree," an ornament usually manufactured from manzanita boughs found in the Arizona desert and Peruvian moss. Apparently, these were all the rage back then for putting on top of one's TV console, and Reid sold a lot of them. So he cleaned up his find with a dental pick, put some varnish on it, and has saved it to this day.

To continue the Heights Hike, exit Menotomy Rocks Park from the southwest corner. Turn left onto Spring Street. At the first right, turn onto Arlmont Street. Continue four blocks to Newport Street. The next parcel will be on the left.

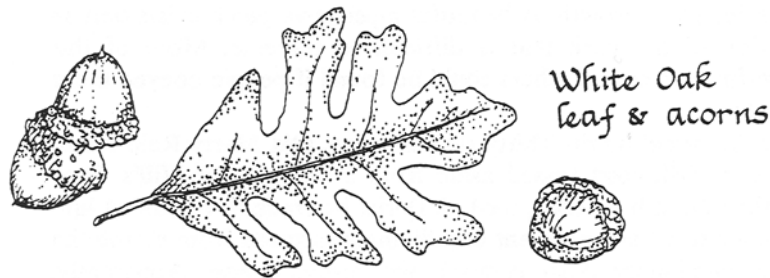
32 Concord Turnpike Conservation Land

The Concord Turnpike conservation land is a tiny, 0.1 acre, wooded parcel between Scituate and Newport Streets and between

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the Concord Turnpike and Arlmont Streets. Although small, it contains a wide variety of trees and shrubs. Look for white ash, common buckthorn, black cherry, choke cherry, bitternut hickory, linden, Norway maple, red maple, sycamore maple, black oak, red oak and white oak. Look out for poison ivy.

[image: 80-1 white oak]



To continue the Heights Hike, turn right onto Scituate Street. Continue to Eastern Avenue, an unmarked street with the double yellow lines down the middle, and turn left. The Brackett School Playground will be on the left.

33 Brackett School Playground

The Brackett School is located across the street from Robbins Farm at 66 Eastern Avenue.

To continue the Heights Hike, cross the street to Robbins Farm.

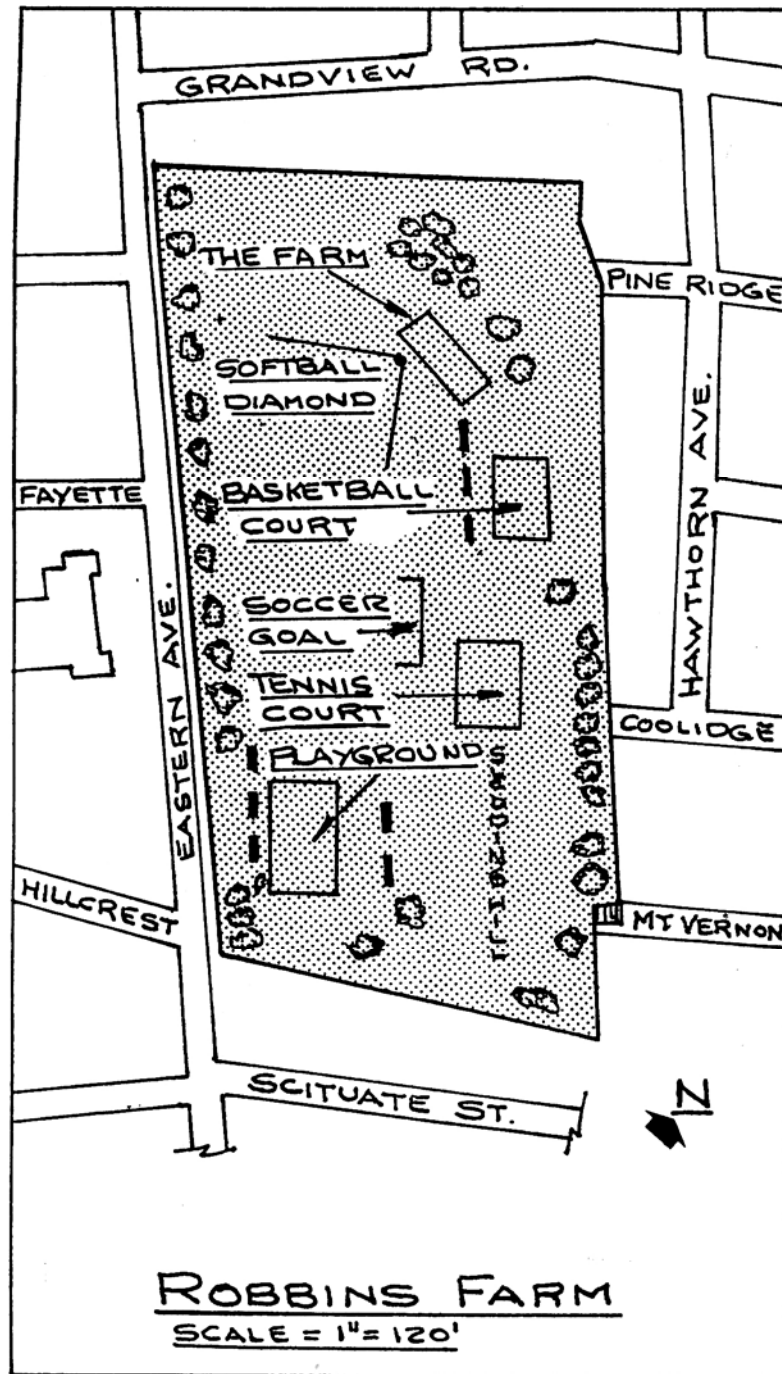
34 Robbins Farm

On warm, sunny days Eastern Avenue is lined with the cars of Robbins Farm playground visitors. On snowy, winter days, sledders throng the steep slope found on the property. And on nights of predicted celestial activity, crowds of people stretch out on blankets and stare at the sky.

Comprising 11 acres, this vast playground with its unique history is a great asset to Arlington. It is located in south central Arlington between Park Circle and Menotomy Rocks Park. Access to the park is possible from Eastern Avenue, Scituate Street, Mount Vernon Street, Longfellow Road or Coolidge Road. Robbins Farm was farmed by three generations of the Robbins family (not related to the Robbins Library folks), from 1880-1941. The corn grown there was said to be the sweetest around. Also grown were asparagus, rhubarb, carrots and other vegetables. There was an orchard and milk and eggs were produced.²⁷

When Nathan Robbins was 74 years old, and in the year 1940, his horse died. This marking the end of an era, he decided to retire. It was his desire that the land be preserved as a park for future generations. However, to prevent this unseemly occurrence, his wife attempted to have 01'Nathan declared incompetent so that she could sell the land to a developer. In spite of this, Nathan had the value of

²⁷Oakes Plimpton, Robbins Farm 1880-1990 Arlington, Massachusetts, 1990, p. 3.





his house, barn and sheds assessed, the tally ending up being \$27,050.22

The Arlington Advocate reported on January 23, 1941, that the neighborhood association felt it was "important to secure this open space in a section which (was) being rapidly built up and...badly in need of a play area." But on March 20, 1941, the Advocate reported that the town would not appropriate the land, since fewer than a two-thirds vote favored this. 23

In reply, the neighborhood wrote an eloquent letter to Town Meeting Members to state the economic value of this open space acquisition. The letter declared, "If sold for real estate development, approximately 56 houses will be built on Robbins Farm at \$5,000 to \$6,000 valuation, according to present trends. The average income to the town from taxes (\$180) wouldn't pay the cost of services rendered by the town (education, fire and police protection, etc.). An addition to the Brackett School (now nearly at capacity) would be required and there would then be a greater need for a playground at a time when no vacant land would be available. Other cities and towns have made the mistake of failing to provide playground areas at a time when such areas were vacant and available. It costs considerably more later." So, on December 15, 1941, Town Meeting members voted in favor of acquiring the land by eminent domain. 24

In WWII, 66 victory gardens graced the land. Tended by 234 people, they produced 1,100 bushels of vegetables and 600 pounds of squash and other items. From this, 9,108 pints of food were canned. The cost to gardeners was \$593.75 and the crop value was about \$3,352. However, after WWII, the gardens came to an end. A baseball diamond was added in 1948 and tennis courts in 1963. 25

22 Ibid, pp. 2, 63.

23 Ibid, p. 64.

24 Ibid, pp. 2, 64, 68.

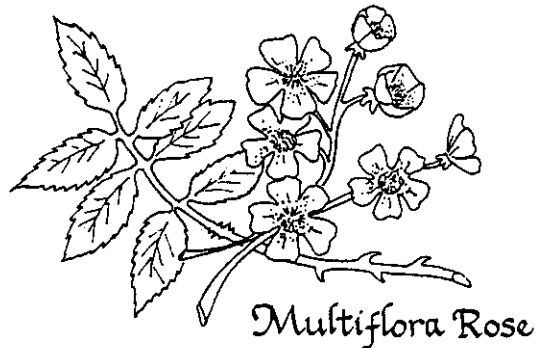
25 Ibid, p. 71.

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

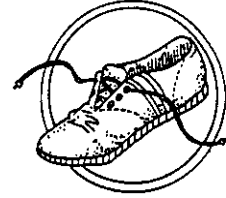
No gardens fill the air with the aroma of fresh dug dirt anymore, but Robbins Farm is still beheld as one of Arlington's treasures, simply because of its view. Sitting on the grass at the top of the steep slope, one can see that beyond the grass there stands a row of trees, green and cool in the summer. To the left, and far off, is a vast, dark green area, the trees of the Middlesex Fells. In the center of one's field of view stretches a thin bar of distant land consisting of trees, houses, water tanks, smoke stacks and the City of Boston. One can see large apartment buildings in which thousands of people live. Tall, city skyscrapers pulse with the dense, intense energy of thousands of people, much like concentrated orange juice in its cardboard canister, pulpy and strong, and one is once again made aware of life's diversity. Beyond this, finally, lies the Atlantic Ocean.

"The Farm" boasts a row of large sugar, red and Norway maples along Eastern Avenue. The visitor can also find sycamores, black locust, white pine and ash near the playground. Look for American elm, cedar, red oak, sumac, black walnut, common buckthorn and Japanese knotweed on the north side. Cherry, rose, maple, black locust and oak can be found on the west side.

[image: 84-1 multiflora rose]



To continue the Heights Hike, continue west on Eastern Avenue to the end. Here is Park Circle, the end of the loop.



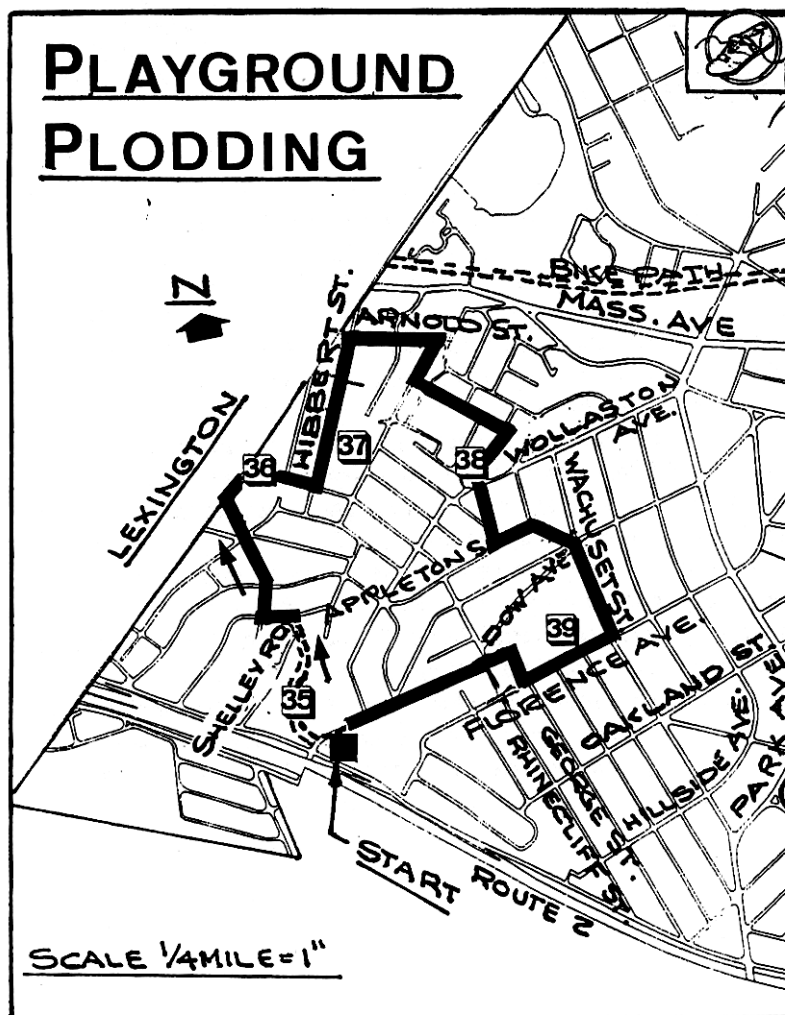
Playground Plodding

The Playground Plodding loop takes one on a 2.2 mile walk that links a variety of playgrounds concentrated in southwest Arlington. The walk starts from the large fields of Poet's Corner and goes on to the wooded setting of the Rublee Street Conservation Land and adjoining Sutherland Woods (Lexington) playground. From there, it continues to a neighborhood hideaway, the Hibbert Street playground. Following the route through the Inverness Road Conservation Land, one ends up at the Florence Avenue playground.

Playgrounds have the capacity to provide urban areas with the expansive landscapes that are so often lacking. Nature writer Robert Finch once described his sense of cities and landscapes: "I think of cities I have known, and of the profound loneliness of urban crowds that is the loneliness of a thing unto itself, however large or extensive. True belonging is born of relationships not only to one another but to a ~ of shared responsibilities and benefits...And paradoxically, it is in such broad, spacious settings as this that a man may feel least alone. The more he allies himself to some varied and interdependent whole, the less he is subject to sudden and wholesale bereavement by chance. His heart rests at the bottom of things; anchored there, he may cast about and never be at sea."²⁶

²⁶ Robert Finch, "Scratching," from *Words from the Land*, edited by Stephen Trimble (Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City, 1989), p.196.

[image: 86-1 playground plodding map]





35 Poet's Corner

This triangular shaped field comprising four acres is located near Route 2 at the corner of Shelley Road and Wadsworth Road. The Roman Catholic Church owns abutting fields to the north and northeast. Park on Dow Avenue or Shelley Road.

A description of Poet's Corner may be an apt place to insert a poem. The following poem was written by a Quiche Indian about his or her home. Quiche is pronounced, kee-chay, and the Quiche Indians are a Mayan people of Guatemala. The poem is called, The Face of My Mountains.

My voice speaks out
to your lips,
to your face;
give me thirteen times twenty days,
to bid farewell
to the face of my mountains,
the face of my valleys,
where once I roamed
to the four world-ends,
the four world-quarters,
seeking and finding
to feed me
and live 27

To continue Playground Plodding, follow Shelley Road north. It will turn into a path through a meadow. Follow the path to

27 In the Trail of the Wind. American Indian Poems and Ritual Orations, edited by John Bierhorst, A Sunburst Book. Michael Di Capua Books; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971, p.46.

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

the end at Browning Road. Turn left onto Browning, then at the first right onto Homer Road, which turns into Udine Street eventually. At the end of Udine Street, where it intersects Rublee Street, one can see the Rublee Street Conservation Land and adjoining Sutherland Woods in Lexington on the left.

36 Rublee Street Conservation Land (and Sutherland Woods)

Located in southwest Arlington, the 0.1 acre Rublee Street Conservation Land provides an entrance to Lexington's 24 acre Sutherland Woods. Park at the intersection of Rublee and Udine Streets and walk through the break in the fence. Sutherland Woods contains both woods and a playground.

Growing in the woods are azalea, gray birch, low and highbush blueberry, pin cherry, huckleberry, maple, European mountain ash, red oak, white oak, sweet pepperbush, white pine and sumac. The Rublee Street Conservation Land is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

To continue the Playground Plodding loop, walk two blocks east down Rublee Street. Turn left onto Hibbert Street. The Hibbert Street playground will be on the right.



37 Hibbert Street Playground

This quaint playground is located on Hibbert Street between Boundary Road and Rublee Street. A small area surrounded on several sides by trees, it offers some privacy and remoteness to visitors.

To continue the Playground Plodding loop, continue north on Hibbert Street, then turn right onto Arnold Street. Follow Arnold to the end, then turn right onto Selkirk Road. This becomes a dirt road. Continue south, and turn left onto Kilsythe Road. Follow Kilsythe Road to the end. (A nonaccessible piece of conservation land lies behind 44 and 48 Kilsythe Road; see the Additional Conservation Lands section.) Turn right onto Inverness Road. The Inverness Road Conservation Land will be on the left.

38 Inverness Road Conservation land

Located in southwest Arlington next to 36 Inverness Road, this wooded 0.1 acre parcel is best accessed by car or bike from Aberdeen Road or Kilsythe Road. It contains two large rocks in the middle and is abound with white ash, Norway maple and oak trees. The area provides a wonderful natural habitat for the neighborhood.

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

The parcel was acquired as tax title land in 1974 for no cost.

To continue the Playground Plodding loop, walk through the Inverness Road Conservation Land and exit the right side (southeast corner). Walk behind the brown fence and scramble up the embankment to Wollaston Avenue. Turn right onto Wollaston Avenue and then take the first left onto Ely Road. (To avoid the embankment, visitors can continue south past the end of Inverness Road. Just after 47 Inverness and 101 Wollaston Avenue, notice a path on the left to Wollaston Avenue. Cross Wollaston onto Ely Road.) Walking down Ely Road, one will pass Short Street. A small piece of conservation land is located next to 8 Short Street. See the Additional Conservation Lands section. Walk to the end of Ely Road and turn left onto Wilbur Avenue, then left onto Appleton Street. Walk to a major intersection and continue straight across onto Wachusett Avenue (unmarked). Turn right onto Florence Avenue. The Florence Avenue playground will be on the right.

39 Florence Avenue Playground

This playground is located at the Dallin School, 145 Florence Avenue.

To continue the Playground Plodding loop, continue southwest on Florence Avenue. Take the first right onto George Street. Follow this street as it bends to the left. Cross Rhinecliff Street onto Dow Avenue. Continue southwest on Dow Avenue to the end. Poet's Corner will be on the right.

Additional Conservation Land

40 Philemon Street Conservation Land (& Whipple Hill)

This land in the northwest corner of Arlington is well worth a visit. It consists of both a right-of-way parcel to the nearby 150 acre Lexington Whipple Hill Conservation Land, as well as a 0.1 acre parcel bordering Whipple Hill. By car, it is best accessed by taking Summer Street to Reed Street to Thesda Street to James Street to Philemon Street, due to better road conditions than the more direct route from Dothan Street to Thesda Street.

The right-of-way to Whipple Hill is located 12.5 feet south of the house at 32 Philemon Street and is 7-12 feet wide. The parcel bordering Whipple Hill can be found by continuing on foot past the end of Philemon Street. Philemon Street turns into a dirt path leading into Whipple Hill. Climb the hill on the right side of the path, immediately behind the houses on Skyline Drive.

The Philemon Street Conservation Land runs behind two houses on Skyline Drive. The north boundary is marked by the stone monument which identifies the spot at which the towns of Lexington, Winchester and Arlington meet. The letters, L, W, and A are found on the faces corresponding to the appropriate towns. It is a high area with a wonderful view of the nearby hills. The area contains white ash, barberry, grey birch, European buckthorn, cherry, white pine, white oak and rose.

The Philemon Street Conservation Land was acquired in 1990. The Lexington Whipple Hill Conservation Land is a wooded area with paths that reaches 374 feet in elevation at Whipple Hill in the northwest corner (the highest point in Lexington). Little's Pond lies in the northeast corner and Whipple Brook runs south from the

Walking the Open Spaces of Arlington, Massachusetts

pond, eventually joining Reed's Brook. For a map of the property, contact the Lexington Conservation Commission.

41 Woodside Lane

A good neighborhood natural area, this 0.6 acre plot is located in northeast Arlington across from #'s 26, 30 and 34 Woodside Lane, just north of the intersection with Oak Hill Drive. The area is difficult to access, since a very steep decline marks the entrance, and there is no path. The area was acquired as tax title land in 1991 at no cost.

42 Hemlock Street

This narrow 127 feet by 65 feet parcel is located near Symmes Hospital. It is uphill from 5 Hemlock Street. The land is steeply sloped, providing a wooded backdrop for the neighboring houses. It contains Norway maple trees and honeysuckle bushes. The parcel was acquired in 1974 at no cost.

43 Park Avenue #53 Rear

This tiny parcel on Mill Brook is located in Arlington Heights behind the Home Center on Park Avenue, north of Massachusetts Avenue. A right-of-way exists in the alley to the left of the Home Center. The site holds potential for those wishing for a brief respite from shopping at this busy downtown location. The parcel's east boundary extends 70 feet from the center of the brook and is marked by the chain link fence. From the fence, the south boundary extends 43 feet west until it reaches the brook. An American elm

growing on the north side of the brook, multiflora rose and occasional ducks lend life to the land here. The parcel was acquired as tax title land in 1974 at no cost.

44 Short Street

This small 0.1 acre land parcel is located in southwestern Arlington next to 8 Short Street. Although currently landscaped by abutting neighbors, it has the potential to act as a natural area and buffer for the neighborhood. To view the spot, park on Short Street. Walking to the end of the street, the land begins 15 feet beyond the house at #8 and extends northeast 75 feet until it reaches the backyard boundary of 11 West Street. The land runs northwest, parallel to Ely Road for 88 feet. This area was acquired as tax title land in 1974 at no cost.

45 Kilsythe Road

This is a landlocked area (no public access) in southwestern Arlington, measuring approximately 50 feet by 81 feet. It is located on the south side of Kilsythe Road, behind #'s 44 and 48 Kilsythe. It was acquired as tax title land in 1974 at no cost.

Additional Playgrounds

A listing of playgrounds is provided here. For a complete delineation of facilities, see a summary of these by Michael Digby (call Arlington Recreation at 641-5492).

46 Bishop School Playground

The Bishop School is located at 25 Columbia Road.

47 Buzzell Field

Buzzell Field is located on Summer Street to the east of Mill Street and across from Edgehill Road.

48 Crosby School Playground

Now called the Dearborn Academy, the playground and field is located on Oxford and Winter Streets, halfway between Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway.

49 Cutter School Playground

The old Cutter School, now a condominium, is located at 1 School Street. The playground is open to the public.

50 Foster Street Playground

This playground is located at the old Junior High East, where the Arlington Center for the Arts is currently housed, among other entities, at 41 Foster Street.

51 Hardy School Playground

The Hardy School is located at 52 Lake Street.

52 Locke School Playground

The old Locke School, now a condominium, is located at 88 Park Avenue.

53 North Union Playground

This is located at the Thompson School, 60 North Union Street.

54 Ottoson Junior High Fields

The Ottoson Junior High is located at 63 Acton Street.

55 Parmenter School Playground

Located at the old Parmenter School, now the École Bilingue, the address is 17 Irving Street.

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56 Peirce, W.A. Field (Arlington High School)

The Arlington High School is located at 865 Massachusetts Avenue.

57 Peirce School Playground

The Peirce School is located at 85 Park Avenue Extension.

58 Waldo Road Playground

The Waldo Road Playground is located on Waldo Road near Saint Paul's cemetery.

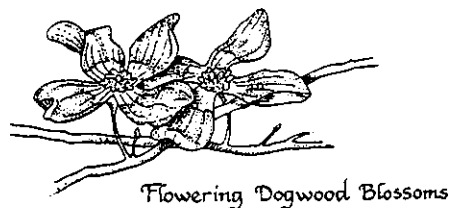
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image: 98-1 flowering dogwood blossoms]



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[Inside Back Cover]

"This longing for unity has everything to do with family, with community and the landscape we are a part of." – Terry Tempest Williams

(From Writing Natural History, Dialogues with Authors, Edited by Edward Lueders, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1989, p. 43.)

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"Wilderness is where you find it and...it can happen, and usually does happen, in places that are not officially designated as wilderness areas."

Robert Finch

(From Writing Natural History, Dialogues with Authors, edited by Edward Lueders, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 1989, p. 60.)